



NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Issue 1

Autumn 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 2007/08

Parish Council Meeting
12th November
Salehurst primary School 2007

Planning Meeting
13th December
Youth Centre 2007

Parish Council Meeting
14th January
Robertsbridge Hall 2008

Planning Meeting
14th February
Youth Centre 2008

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 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

Late Night Shopping
Friday December 7th

Two issues have been particularly in the forefront during the summer – the future of the village post office and the future of the former mill site.

Post Office – Royal Mail have now formally decided to close the Robertsbridge sorting office with effect from early December.



Apart from the inconvenience that this will cause to residents in having to go to Battle to collect undelivered post, it also reduces the income for the post office. At the same time, the Post Office is carrying out a national review of post office branches and a decision about Robertsbridge will probably be taken in November. If it is decided to keep post

office counter services in Robertsbridge, the sub-postmaster, David Claydon, has decided that the loss of income from the sorting office means that he cannot continue to run the service in the present building and is proposing to move it into his travel agency across the road. Many will recall that the counter services were moved into this building when it was The Bread Bin after the floods of 2000. At the same time he has applied for change of use for the existing building from mixed commercial/residential to residential.

Rother Planning Officers recommended refusal of this on the grounds that it contravenes the Planning Policy laid down in the Local Plan which attempts to protect our shops and businesses. Earlier in the summer the Planning Inspectorate upheld Rother's refusal to allow change of use on the newsagents in Station Road. However, in their report the Planning Officers said that there would be no objection to moving the post office counter into the travel agents building as this is already classed as commercial – **the two issues, moving the PO and change of use of the existing building, are not linked in planning terms.**

The Parish Council considered the application for change of use at their meeting in September and decided to ask Rother District Council to defer their decision on whether the existing post office premises should be converted to residential use. It felt that as Post Office Ltd had not yet completed its review of postal services or made decisions about closures, the application in front of them was premature. At a subsequent meeting Rother did defer a decision but have now refused the application. We now await the Post Office review of services.

See Page 2 for news on the Mill site

Flood Defences - the flooding that occurred in many parts of the country earlier in the summer no doubt reminded residents of our own experiences in 2000. It was reassuring therefore to see the Environment Agency carrying out an 'Emergency practice' in September to ensure that all our defences were operating correctly.

The practice went extremely smoothly—all systems operating correctly and all members of the team well trained and ready.

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.

Emergency planning - is about being prepared and responding in an appropriate and effective manner. When considering major emergencies, many people in Robertsbridge would naturally think of flooding, but a civil emergency is defined as '*any event or set of events that causes or threatens to cause major physical damage to property within the parish, the disruption of basic services to the parish, or fatal or other injuries to residents on a scale, or in the context of a wider emergency, that would stretch the normal emergency services*'. So any extreme weather conditions be it heat, cold, rain or snow; accidents; illness epidemics, national strikes affecting deliveries of critical products and services etc.

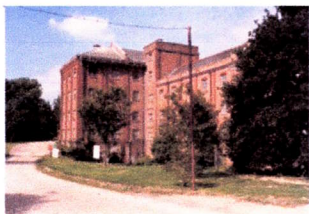
The response to emergencies, in the UK, is primarily delivered at the local level. Rother District Council maintains an Emergency Plan which is constructed with the full co-operation of all of the Emergency Services and Utilities and other organisations. However, the widespread flooding and severe weather events experience over the last few years have highlighted the difficulties for the emergency services and local authorities in being able to respond fully without the assistance of the local community affected. These and other scenarios have shown that a wealth of information and knowledge can be best provided at grass root

level, and there are also actions the local community can take to help themselves, particularly in rural area like ours. These actions will be more effective if we have a planned and co-ordinated response prepared and in place before an emergency strikes.

With this in mind, the Parish Council, in association with Rother District Council is about to start work on producing a **Parish Emergency Plan**. The aim is to provide a first point of contact and a framework of contacts and activities which will fulfil two functions – to assist and support the emergency and responding agencies, or in the event of isolation, to respond by self-help within the capabilities of the community until support from the other agencies is available.

A small **working group** is being formed to produce the plan and to gather the necessary information from the community and we are looking for **volunteers** from the parish to join myself and two of our councillors, Michael Rix and Simon Longhurst. If you would be interested in taking part in this valuable project please contact me at the Parish Office.

Mrs Karen Ripley
Clerk to the Council



Mill Site – In July, the developers acting for the owners of the mill site presented their proposals for a mixed development of this site at a public exhibition in the village. The proposal was for 66 new dwellings, conversion of the former mill building to 11 apartments, conversion of the listed oast house into 2 dwellings and for new commercial space. In addition, a new doctors surgery and also a dentist. In line with Rother District planning rules, 40% of the new residential units would be 'affordable housing' which means controlled by a Housing Association. The exhibition was well

attended and in general the response was positive with most people, with some reservations, supporting the proposals for re-development but most would like to see fewer house and more commercial space.

A full planning application has now been submitted and the Parish Council held another display of the plans on a Saturday morning to give those who had not been able to attend the previous exhibition a chance to comment. The Parish Council then considered the application at a special meeting and decided that whilst they were not opposed in principle to the re-development of the site they were concerned about the ratio of residential to commercial space and the traffic considerations and therefore recommended refusal.

New Lights for Old - The Parish Council has replaced the old street light that stood outside Culverwell's in Station Road with a new, more efficient light. At the same time, the new light was re-positioned on the opposite of the road outside the village hall.

The old light was removed from the very narrow pavement and the new lamp is less vulnerable to damage by large vehicles entering and leaving Culverwell's.

Advice from Trading Standards - Dealing with Doorstep Callers

The vast majority of callers at your door will be genuine. It is the small minority that we need to be aware of, and need to be on our guards against. How do we know if the caller at door is genuine? Well, opening comments such as "I'm from the Water Board, there's a leak next door / up the road, And we need to check your water" Or "I'm working on next door's fence, give me £200, and I'll fix yours" or "Do you have any gardening work I can do?".....should all ring warning bells.

Beating the bogus caller can be quite simple....Remember..

"STOP" Is anyone expected? Make sure the back door is locked.

"CHAIN" Put the door chain on BEFORE opening the door.

"CHECK" Ask for identification, if they have none, do not let them in.

Remember also, many of these callers will target more elderly folk, they hope they will be able to trick more easily. For somebody who is partially sighted or blind, and could not check an identity card, try to have a neighbour that you could call on to help. It is your home and you should not let anybody into your home unless you are satisfied you know who they are. A door chain can be relatively cheap to fit, and could save a lot of trouble.

Doorstep Caller cards are available from the Parish office or from Age Concern. Placed at the front door, the card can act as a deterrent to unwanted callers, but can also help remind you to use the door chain.

Community Support Officer

07810 656 247

tinamarie.grevett@sussex.pnn.police.uk

The Story of the High Weald's Landform

This is the first of a series of articles about the area in which we live - the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers parts of 4 counties – East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey and is a nationally important landscape. With an area of 570 square miles (1,457 sq km) it is the 4th largest AONB in the UK. It was designated by Government in 1983 to conserve and enhance its historic character of rolling hills draped with small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes.

Your parish was once covered by shallow lakes, in which dinosaurs paddled!

The High Weald gets its rolling countryside from bands of sandstone and clay. The hard sandstone forms the high ridges, running east-west. The softer clay is easily worn away and it forms the low valleys in between.

The sandstones and clays of the High Weald were originally laid down as sandy and muddy sediments. Starting around 140 million years ago (when dinosaurs still roamed) these sediments formed at the bottom of shallow lakes, or were carried by rivers and deposited on floodplains.

Around 100 million years ago, sea levels rose and the remains of billions of tiny sea creatures then formed another layer of sediment above the sands and muds. Over time, this became chalk. Around 30 million years ago, massive earth movements began to push all the compacted layers of sediment up, creating a giant, chalk-covered dome. Over time, water eroded most of the chalk away, revealing the older sandstones and clays beneath – the High and Low Weald. The chalk at the edges of the dome has remained - forming the North and South Downs.

The hardest areas of sandstone now form the distinctive sandrock outcrops of the High Weald. In addition, fast-flowing streams have carved out characteristic, steep-sided ravines called *gills* in the steep sides of the sandstone ridges. The porous, moisture-holding sandrock and sheltered, damp gills provide ideal living conditions for ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens. Many of these species are more characteristic of the mild and humid oceanic climate of Wales and Cornwall than that of the South East. Most famous is the tiny - and extremely rare - Tunbridge Filmy-fern.

Text provided by the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee's staff Unit. This is a specialist team that advises on the management of the AONB; furthers understanding of its special qualities and enables action to conserve it.

To find out more, please visit www.highweald.org

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:
Mrs Karen Ripley

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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

Shoe Recycling - Each year in the UK over 3330 million pairs of new shoes are bought and a similar number discarded - some are incinerated but most end up in landfill. The village post office has a collecting box for European Recycling Co. Ltd which sorts the shoes and then sells them onto third world countries where they are refurbished and resold at affordable prices.

The company donates to the Variety Club Children's Charity which helps to improve the lives of sick, disabled and disadvantaged children in the UK. For more information see www.europeanrecycling.co.uk

Also, you can leave unwanted shoes and clothing at the Salvation Army collection point at Robertsbridge Station.

Do your bit to save energy – and money!

- Turn down your thermostat – reducing room temperature by 1°C could cut your bills by 10% a year.
- Don't leave appliances on standby or on charge unnecessarily.
- Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.
- Use energy saving light bulbs – they can save up to £60 over their life time.

Your Councillors and their responsibilities

Planning Committee - Chairman or vice-Chairman, Cllr. R. Clymo, Cllr. C. Kimberley, Cllr. G. Smith, Cllr. J. Smith

Cemetery Committee - Chairman or vice-Chairman, Cllr. N. Barden, Cllr. G. Smith

Lead Councillors

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

Recreation Ground & Pavilion - Cllr. S. Longhurst, 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 cldr.peter.jones@eastsussex.gov.uk

Rother District Councillors

Mr George Hearn 819233 cldr.george.hearn@rother.gov.uk

Mrs Susan Prochak 881309 cldr.susan.prochak@rother.gov.uk