



Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Issue 3

Summer 2008

**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 or via our web site.**

## Dates for your diary 2008

Planning Meeting 14th  
Youth Centre August  
2008

Parish Council 8th  
Meeting September  
Robertsbridge 2008  
Hall

Planning Meeting 9th  
Youth Centre October  
2008

Parish Council 10th  
Meeting November  
Robertsbridge 2008  
Hall

*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 - [www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk) and you can comment on planning applications on-line*

**Flooding Again?** - hopefully not, of course, but with our very unpredictable weather these days residents will no doubt like to be reassured that everything possible is being done to prevent a repeat of October 2000.

The Parish Council has arranged for the Environment Agency (EA) to hold an exhibition in the village to explain and demonstrate our defence system.

This will be held on:

**SATURDAY 27th SEPTEMBER at  
ROBERTSBRIDGE HALL**

This will probably be from about 10am until 4pm - exact times will be publicised nearer the date but please put the date in your diary now!

Officers from the EA will be on hand to explain the scheme and answer questions and we hope, weather etc. permitting, to organise some demonstrations of the flood barriers in operation and walks along the bunds to make the scheme clearer.

We also hope to have Officers from Rother DC Emergency teams present.

**Mill Site** – As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the owners of the Mill site have lodged an appeal against Rother DC's non-determination of it's planning application. Rother have now recommended refusal of the application as it stands but the matter will now be decided after a public inquiry.



At the time of writing, the Inquiry was set to start on 8th July in Bexhill and was expected to last 4 days - a decision will probably now be published in the autumn.

**The Local Action Plan** - A questionnaire was distributed to over 1000 homes in the parish during 2007 and nearly 400 were returned, which is a good response for this type of survey.

The LAP working group of the Parish Council have now analysed the responses and produced its report which is available to view on the LAP web site ([www.sarlap.co.uk](http://www.sarlap.co.uk)) and printed copies are available in the parish office.

The completed plan highlights actions that residents would like taken forward and various working groups have been set up with volunteers trying to achieve this.

If you would like to get involved in this your help would be appreciated, please contact Cllr. Tamara Strapp who is heading the group on behalf of the Council.

**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.

**Housing needs** - The Parish Council, in association with Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS), recently conducted a Housing Needs Survey in the Parish and we are grateful to those who took the time to complete it.

The survey has now been analysed and the results indicate that -

*There are 36 households in housing need who have a local connection and who cannot afford to either purchase or rent on the open market.*

The full report can be viewed on the parish web site on the News & Events page and copies are held at the parish office for public inspection during normal office opening hours (Tuesday 9 - 11am and Thursday 2 - 4pm).

The Parish Council is now liaising with Rother District and AiRS to see how these needs might be addressed.

*This is the third 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.*

***Follow a sunken lane in your parish and you will be treading in the steps of Saxon drovers and their pigs!***

The High Weald has a radiating network of ancient routeways - often deeply sunken in places. These routes were first formed when early settlers from the surrounding lands began to exploit the High Weald woods not only for timber and fuel but as a seasonal source of food for their animals - acorns!

Domesticated pigs, being descended from wild boar, enjoyed acorns as a natural food. From the Neolithic period (c.4300 – 1400BC) or even earlier, farmers from the South Downs, North Downs and coastal plains would drive their pigs into the woods each year to fatten them on acorns and beech mast. This happened in late summer or early autumn and is known as *pannage*.

The Weald was the stronghold of pannage in Britain. In 1086 - when the practice was already past its peak - Domesday records indicate that around 150,000 pigs would have been driven to and from the woods of the High and Low Weald! Farmers from a particular village returned with their pigs to the same woodland place year after year. These woodland pig pastures were called *dens*.

The frequent passage of pigs being driven to and from the dens formed tracks known as *droves*, connecting the dens to their parent villages – often 20 miles away. When the dens became settlements in their own right, the roughly north-south droving routes remained - and can be seen today in the pattern of lanes, bridleways and footpaths radiating away from the High Weald.

Centuries of use by many trotters, feet, hooves - and, later, cartwheels - have worn the soft ground away so that, today, many of the routes have deeply sunken sections.

In spring and summer, the High Weald's narrow, sunken lanes with their ancient, wooded banks are transformed into shady 'tree tunnels'. Many are lined in places with wildflower-rich verges, important wildlife refuges - some even designated as 'Roadside Nature Reserves'.

*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](http://www.highweald.org)*



**Help the Environment—Help your Village Society** Many of you will be aware that supermarkets and others are planning to stop providing free carrier bags as part of efforts to help the environment and to reduce the use of oil. They are encouraging shoppers to bring their own bags or buy re-usable bags. As part of this they are selling shopping bags made from renewable materials such as jute or linen.

Well, rather than put more money into the supermarkets pockets, why not buy one of the bags produced by the Robertsbridge Bonfire Society? They cost £3.25 and are available from the Village Butcher's or from Sandy at the Floral Boutique—this way you can help the environment and your village society!

### **Chairman's report – as presented at the Annual Assembly May 2008**

This has been an eventful year! Elections were held in May and two Councillors – John Stokoe and Brian Brazier stood down after a number of years of service. At the election their places were filled by Dicky Clymo and Simon Longhurst.

In December, sadly Michael Rix, our vice-Chairman, died and there being no calls for an election the Council co-opted Neville Davies to fill the vacancy. Then, in March, Jack Smith resigned from the Council and again there being no call for an election, the Council will co-opt at the meeting in May if a suitable candidate comes forward.

Two major issues dominated the year and continue to do so – the future of the Mill site and the Post Office. The proposals for the Mill site development were felt by the Council to be unacceptable because the proportion of housing to commercial space was too great. The developers have now taken their plans to appeal and this will be heard at a public inquiry which hopefully will be held in the village. *(now to be held in Bexhill Ed.)*

The future of the post office understandably caused a lot of concern in the village and there was considerable relief when Post Office Ltd announced that they had no plans to close Robertsbridge. The post master applied to move the post office into his travel agents premises and there were no objections to this from either the Parish Council or Rother District. But a concomitant application for change of use of the original building to purely residential was opposed by the Parish Council and Rother District because of the loss of another shop premises, particularly in this prime position in the village. This too has gone to appeal and the Inspectorate has decided to hold a public inquiry which again, hopefully, will be held in the village so that the facts of the case can be heard. One outcome of all this was that the post master lodged a complaint against the Parish Council which he claimed was interfering in his business but he subsequently withdrew this.

In January prolonged heavy rain caused concern and on the evening of the 12th the Environment Agency came close to closing the flood barriers but, fortunately the rain ceased and this was not necessary. There were some problems with surface water run off and we thank Sue Prochak and Rother Officers who arranged and delivered sand bags as necessary.

The Local Action Plan has now been published and I should like to thank all those involved in its completion and in particular Cllr. Tamara Strapp.

A Housing Needs Survey is being conducted in association with Action in Rural Sussex and this should give us a better idea of the real needs in the village.

The Newsletter is being well received, at least in most quarters, and we are especially grateful to the volunteers who deliver it for us but more help is always welcome.

Finally, I would like to thank our PCSO Tina Grevett who is doing a first rate job and all the others who give their help to improve and sustain our community and to the W.I. for providing help and refreshments for tonight's meeting.

And a special thank you to Cllr. Sue Prochak who works tirelessly for the village and to our Clerk, Karen, who puts in many hours of work on our behalf over and above that which she is paid for.

**New Councillor** - Following the resignation of Cllr. Jack Smith, the Council advertised the vacancy and there being no call for an election advertised again for any interested residents to come forward.

Two very suitable candidates put their names forward and the Council had the unenviable task of choosing between them. In the event they chose Mr Charles Beeden, a long time resident of the village, but we are grateful to the unsuccessful candidate and thank her for her interest in the village.

## SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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Mrs Karen Ripley

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[www.robertsbridge-pc.org.uk](http://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](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

### Parish Councillors Tel:

Cllr David Allen (Chairman) 881056  
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Cllr Tamara Strapp (vice-Chair) 881291  
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Cllr Charles Beeden 880508  
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Cllr Gillian Smith 880810  
shop: 882265

### East Sussex County Councillor

Cllr Peter Jones  
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### Rother District Councillors

Cllr George Hearn 819233  
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Cllr Susan Prochak 881309  
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## Parish Annual Assembly

This year we changed the format of this event and, thanks to the efforts of the W.I. members, were able to offer refreshments and the chance for residents to meet and talk with others about the many and varied activities that take place in our village.

We hope to repeat this next year - many thanks to all who gave their services to make this such a successful event.

**News & Events** - Since the launch of the parish web site we have had a *News & Events* page on which we have tried to publicise what is going on in the village and other items which we feel might be of interest to residents. But, we rely on being told about them before we can add them to the site!

We have now made it easier for you to send us your news by having an e-mail link on the web page - send us the details and we'll publicise it.

**A request** - our office is open to the public at the times shown opposite, **please** restrict your visits to these times. Although the Clerk is usually in the office at other times, she has other work to do and visits outside public opening times disrupt this.

If you have any urgent matters then please, telephone and leave a message if necessary or e-mail. Thank you.

### **"SEND THREE AND FOUR PENCE WE'RE GOING TO A DANCE"**

It's true you might have to be getting on a bit to appreciate the title of this piece. It's part of an old joke: A soldier is sending a message from the front line back to base. The message is "send reinforcements, we are going to advance" - by the time it has been repeated through several people the receiver hears "send three (shillings) and four pence...etc".

At the Parish Council Meeting held on March 10<sup>th</sup> one of the many important items on the agenda was the resignation of a councillor. The letter was read out, debated at length and minuted accordingly. Within days there was a rumour circulating the village saying that the letter had *not* been read out. Anyone present at the meeting, councillors and members of the public alike heard it read out, so where did this piece of misinformation originate? Was it simply a case of the truth being lost along the way, just like the old joke?

Your Parish Council works hard, within strict legal guidelines and restraints, to do its very best for Robertsbridge, so please, if you're in doubt about anything you hear about us, check it out with someone who knows. Better still, why not come along to the meetings and see, and hear, for yourself.

Cllr. Christine Kimberley