



NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Issue 4

Autumn 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 2008/09

Parish Council Meeting 10th November 2008
Robertsbridge Hall

Planning Meeting 11th December 2008
Youth Centre

Parish Council Meeting 12th January 2008
Robertsbridge Hall

Planning Meeting 12th February 2009
Youth Centre

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 and you can comment on planning applications on-line



A brilliantly sunny autumn day is perhaps not the best setting for an exhibition about flood defences but the one organised by the Parish Council and the Environment Agency on 27th September was very well attended and was appreciated by those who did.

Residents were able to see the design and operation of the defences and were hopefully re-assured about the Environment Agency's preparedness and the professionalism of their teams.



On 23rd October the Environment Agency are also planning to carry out a full-scale practice which will involve a road closure at the Clappers and Station Road for a short time from 9am whilst the stop-log barriers are erected and tested.



New shops for the Village! It is good to see the former newsagents in Station Road open again—this time as a local convenience store. It has been a long haul getting this shop re-opened and the Parish Council and Rother DC have come in for some criticism for not allowing a change of use to purely residential but we were convinced that a buyer would come forward.

Also, we are pleased to see that the former hairdresser shop at 22 High Street has re-opened. This is a new venture by four local people – Winston, Diane, Adrian and Nadia – selling second-hand furniture and bric-a-brac. **“It’s a Snip”** will be appropriately located at the former hairdresser premises at 22a High Street. You are very welcome to go in and browse with no obligation and they will also try to sell your unwanted goods for you on a ‘no sale, no charge’ commission basis.

We wish them all success in their new ventures.

No Parking - Some drivers apparently do not understand the law relating to double white lines along the centre of the road.

Either side of the level crossing there are double white lines along the centre of the road which are there for safety to ensure that the crossing is kept clear. Some drivers assume that because there are no yellow lines it is alright to park - it is not! **RULE 240** of the Highway Code clearly states that you **Must Not** stop or park on a road marked with double white lines, except to pick up or set down passengers (even if the lines are broken!) You risk a £60 fine and 2 penalty points if you do.

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.

Traffic calming - following the recent tragic accident in Station Road it is not surprising that some residents have asked what the Parish Council is doing about speeding. The Parish Council shares these concerns and has for many years attempted to deal with them but, we are not a highway authority and rely on the agreement of ESCC for permission to install any form of speed control and to carry out the necessary safety surveys. Unfortunately, Robertsbridge is not high on their priorities because many villages have 40 or 50 MPH speed limits and these are being given priority. Any form of speed control, if consent is given, has to be paid for in full out of the parish council budget and all of this has to be raised through the precept on Council Tax. We did a few years ago install speed reducing measures in Heathfield Gardens but these were extremely expensive and the measures taken in a relatively minor road are not always suitable for roads on a bus route etc.

Speed humps are not popular with emergency services etc. but neither are they with residents! The recent Local Action Plan (LAP) survey showed a clear majority wanted a reduction in speeding traffic but did not want any further speed humps! In the light of resident's responses in the LAP and our own researches, the Parish Council decided earlier this year to explore the option of the illuminated speed warning signs. These seem to have had some beneficial effects in other villages and are possibly easier to get permission for and at the last parish council meeting we agreed to push forward with this and to consider putting the required sums in next year's budget but we are also exploring other systems.



The Planning Inspectors decision on the Mill site appeal has been published. The main conclusion is that the appeal has been largely dismissed and the only part allowed is the conversion of the listed building - the small stone one at the west end of the site, not the main brick building - to two residential units. Hopefully, the applicants will now re-start meaningful discussions with Rother. The full report can be seen in the Parish Office during normal opening times or on the web site at <http://www.salehurst-pc.org.uk/viewItem.asp?Key=421>

The Inquiry into the former post office building appeal was held on 19th August and a decision is expected soon.

Neighbourhood Panel

A Neighbourhood Panel has been set up to cover the three policing districts (Salehurst & Robertsbridge; Hurst Green and Bodiam) covered by our Neighbourhood support team which includes our PCSO Tina Grevett. The panel will be an informal local public meeting where members of the community can discuss issues that concern them with local police and partners and joint decisions can be made as to what are the most important or pressing issues for the community and which need to be dealt with as a priority.

The inaugural meeting took place on 2nd October in Robertsbridge and several members of the public agreed to be part of the Panel including a representative from the parish council, Cllr. Charles Beeden. Future meetings of the panel will take place every 3 or 4 months and the meetings will usually be circulated around the 3 parishes. The meetings will be open to the public who will be encouraged to put forward their views on priorities.

Quiet Lanes - As a result of the interest shown by many residents, the SARLAP committee is looking for people to join a working party to investigate the possibility of 'Quiet Lanes' in the Parish. If you would like to be involved please contact Christine Kimberley on christine.kimberley@salehurst-pc.org.uk

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.

The landscape of your parish looks pretty much as it did in medieval times!

The High Weald's rolling hills are draped with small, irregular fields, edged with ancient boundaries and wood banks and often containing flower-rich grassland. Colourful areas of heath, with patches of purple heather and yellow gorse, are found on the high, sandy ridges.

After the Anglo-Saxon period, the practice of driving pigs into the Wealden woods to feed on acorns began to decline. Settlers moved in to the High Weald in increasing numbers. As the seasonal woodland pig pastures (*dens*) gradually changed to permanent places of settlement, the High Weald's first pioneer farmers began clearing the surrounding woods and scrub to make fields.

Clearance was done in an unplanned, piecemeal fashion by the individual farmsteads. This is why the High Weald's fields are irregular in shape and relatively small. Field boundaries were simply formed by leaving strips of the original woodland between the fields.

By the 14th century, the High Weald was settled and the landscape, with its irregular fields, small woods and heathy commons, looked much the same way as it does today. The landscape of the High Weald is essentially medieval: this can be said of few other places in the country.

With their heavy clay soils and steep slopes, many High Weald fields have never been ploughed up to grow crops and have traditionally been used for rearing domestic livestock instead. Compared to many areas of Britain, the AONB still has a relatively large number of ancient, undisturbed, wildflower-rich hay meadows and pastures. These 'unimproved' grasslands are some of our most important habitats for wildlife conservation, supporting up to 100 kinds of grasses and wildflowers – which, in turn, support a great variety of insects and other creatures.

Heathlands were first created by clearing and were then maintained by grazing on the poor, sandy soils that occur on the high, sandstone ridges of the High Weald. A prime example is Ashdown Forest at the very heart of the High Weald, the largest expanse of open heathland in the South East. A former Royal hunting forest, Ashdown is the best surviving example of four medieval forests that existed on the AONB's highest sandstone ridge, known as the Weald Forest Ridge - the others being: St Leonards, Worth and Broadwater Forests .

In much of England, heaths have disappeared, but the High Weald area is an important stronghold for this dramatic type of landscape. Heaths support rare and unusual wildlife species with their special conditions. Examples include the Dartford Warbler and Silver-studded Blue Butterfly.

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

Play Pathfinder Scheme - The Parish Council working with the Rother DC Parks Development Officer, Rebecca Owen, is bidding to provide more play equipment for teenagers. This will be sited at the Recreation Ground on the Clappers where it is fairly central to all parts of the parish.

Rebecca organised a trip to Brentwood in Essex during the summer for some of our young people to see some exciting and imaginative equipment and the Parish Council identified and short listed a number of possible items that could be installed given the space and funds available.

Consultation with young people was organised with an exhibition in the village hall at which they were invited to nominate their preferences and we are now pushing forward with our funding bid. Time is now of the essence as any project funded has to be completed by the end of March 2009! - we will need a dry winter.

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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The Parish Office is open to the public at the following times:

Tuesday	9am to 11am
Thursday	2pm to 4pm

Rother District Council

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Peter Seymour-Eyles

Sadly, Peter died on 2nd September 2008. Peter was Clerk to our Parish for some 5 years from 1998 and served us with enthusiasm and distinction during some changing and stressful times, particularly after the flooding in October 2000.

We had not only a good professional working relationship but a good personal relationship too. The times that we met to prepare Agendas or to discuss other Council business were always enjoyable - I liked his sense of humour which he retained to the end and I liked the way he was always ready to take on a new challenge and his consideration for others.

Peter was a good man, I feel privileged to have known him and we are all poorer for his passing.

David Allen, Chairman

Twinning Association Anniversary

It's hard to believe that next year will be the 10th Anniversary of the friendship between Robertsbridge and St Brice in France. It was at the Parish Council meeting in November 1999 that the agreement to twin was formalised. Of course a lot of hard work had gone into the choice of a suitable 'twin' long before that and a dedicated committee spent a considerable amount of time doing just that. The 1st official signing ceremony took place in Robertsbridge in April 2000 and in St.Brice in June 2000.

So, why St. Brice? Well you'd have to ask the original committee - but the main reason must surely be the people. Any relationship that lasts this long does so because of the friendships and bonds that have grown up over the years. The fact that they are slap-bang in the middle of the Champagne region is a delightful added bonus but it still comes down to the people.

This is exemplified by their concern for Robertsbridge during the flooding. More than mere concern, our friends in St.Brice held a collection to raise funds for flood relief.

Looking to the future we hope to develop more links with our French friends. Sporting events perhaps and opportunities for the children to get to know each other better sharing their interests and of course their languages.

If you would like to find out more about the Twinning Association, would like to visit St.Brice, host a French family/couple/single person or have any ideas for the future please contact JOAN GRANTHAM (Secretary) on 01580 881 442

Cllr. Christine Kimberley

A thought for today (and always?) - " You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you can not fool all the people all the time" *Abraham Lincoln*