



NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 Issue 2

May 2009

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.

Our Annual Assembly on 20th April was well attended and the many local groups attending showed once again what a vibrant community we have in this village. We had a slightly different format this year giving residents more chance to meet and talk to other residents and groups and, enjoy the food and refreshments prepared by the members of the Robertsbridge W.I. for the Council! Comments from residents since suggest that this format was appreciated and we will build on this for next year. Many thanks to all who helped to make the event so successful.

Dates for your diary 2009

<i>Planning Meeting Youth Centre</i>	<i>11th June 2009</i>
<i>Parish Council Meeting (Accounts/ Finance)</i>	<i>15th June 2009</i>
<i>Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall</i>	<i>13th July 2009</i>
<i>Planning Meeting Youth Centre</i>	<i>13th August</i>
<i>Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall</i>	<i>14th September 2009</i>
<i>Planning Meeting Youth Centre</i>	<i>8th October 2009</i>

LOCAL ACTION PLAN

ROBERTSBRIDGE MID SUMMER EVENT SUNDAY 21ST JUNE

Join us in the Recreation Ground, Robertsbridge between 12.30 and 4.30 to celebrate mid-summer, Fathers Day, National Cycle week and being in Robertsbridge! Bring a picnic, bring friends and enjoy a variety of activities – or just chill out. There will be two family entertainers there too, thanks to both Rother District Council and RAP.



The event is organised by the Local Action Plan Project Group Summer Events Committee in response to the interest shown for such events in the 2007-8 LAP questionnaire.

As part of a 5 year plan a Grand Summer Ball will be our next major event for June 2010.

From time to time you will see fund raising events advertised, such as the recent Village Barn Dance, which we hope you will enjoy supporting.

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



Parking problems - recently, the Parish Council asked our PCSO to enforce the parking restrictions in Station Road and the High Street - why?

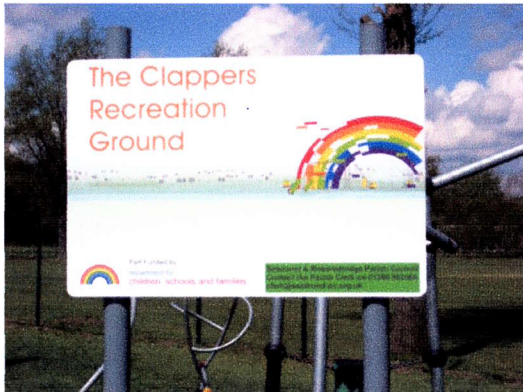
For some time now the Council has been trying to get ESCC Highways to help resolve the problem of commuter parking in Mill Rise and the surrounding roads and the best way forward on this would be some limited parking restriction such as in Station Road or Willow Bank. But, ESCC are unlikely to want to help if the current restrictions are widely flouted and not policed.

The restrictions in Station Road/Willow Bank were put in to help businesses and the surgery and for some time now the spaces have been filled all day with commuters. Drivers have also been using the Loading Bay in the High Street to park for long periods making it difficult for deliveries to the business premises.

We have two free car parks in the village and a fair amount of on-street parking.

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.

Play Pathfinder Scheme - On Saturday 25th April, the official opening for our new play equipment took place with many young people and parents present.



We had only 8 months from being advised about the possible availability of the £50,000 grant money to carry out consultation with the young people of the village, get their decision on choice of equipment, obtain quotes and get the equipment installed before the March 31st deadline. So this was quite an achievement especially as we had two flood events during the winter when the Recreation Ground was under water for a number of hours. It has been suggested since that the land is not suitable as a Recreation Ground because of flooding but this has not prevented it being used for this purpose for over a hundred years and the play equipment is able to survive it and has done so many times. It may not be the most ideal place to have a Recreation Ground (or indeed a cricket pitch and pavilion) but then it is not an ideal area to have a village, but it is what we have! The wet conditions did delay the installation for a couple of weeks because heavy works vehicles driving over the land would have caused too much damage.

However, we made it and we have received many compliments from residents and not least of course from the young people of the village and anyone who doubts its popularity only needs to visit the recreation ground on a sunny afternoon after school.

The cricket club have not been happy and some misinformation has been put about to the effect that cricket can no longer be played in Robertsbridge – this is nonsense. Cricket is played around the country in villages with houses and play areas etc. close by – it is a matter of the club assessing the dangers posed by their activities and taking reasonable steps to minimise them. This is clearly spelt out by the advice from the East Sussex Cricket League in their Legal Update available on their web site www.escl.org.uk – a copy of which is available to view in the parish office. We have always said that we would be happy to work with the club to overcome their problems and to this end we have provided nearly £3000 to erect a 2 metre high weld mesh fence along the boundary (the highest allowed without planning permission). The Club's proposal to erect a further 3 metres of nylon mesh above this which can be removed between matches should be sufficient. We have advised them of possible sources of funding towards this.



Why did we site it there? - for a number of reasons:

- It creates a 'family experience' with older children able to interact with younger siblings
- We decided not to install in existing play area because: a) not enough space and b) it separates young children from older
- By keeping close to car park it creates a space for teenagers to gather but still be in view.
- Siting remotely across the football pitch would mean less observation and more likelihood of vandalism and, importantly, bullying of younger children trying to use the facilities.

Consideration was given to siting in other places but in addition to the reasons above, there are constraints on space due to the football pitch and need to rotate at intervals and the potential establishment of a 'kick about area' for young people in the future.

It has been suggested that we should have installed in the land by the village hall but the village hall and surrounding land do not belong to the parish council. We do own the small area known as Piper's Field but this has restrictive covenants on it preventing its use for that purpose. Also, the Parish Council has decided that it wants to concentrate its main play area at the Clappers which is fairly central for all parts of the parish.

Chairman's Report April 2009

(This is a shortened version of the report – the full version is available in the Parish Office)

This has been a busy and at times difficult year. In May we co-opted a new member, Charles Beeden, to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Jack Smith.

We received the report from the Housing Needs Survey and have been trying, unsuccessfully so far, to identify a piece of land to fulfil the needs.

Two major planning appeals were heard during the year. Firstly for the old Mill site which the developers lost. We had hoped that this would encourage the developers to enter meaningful discussions with Rother but instead they have gone for a judicial review. The second was for the change of use for the former post office building which was eventually won by the appellant. The Planning Inspectorate decided to hold a Public Inquiry apparently because of the public interest in the matter as evidenced by the number of letters and signatures on the petition that was organised. The effect was to significantly prolong the process. This matter has caused much division and ill-feeling in the village caused by misunderstanding and misinformation about the nature of the application and the stance of the parish council and Rother DC. In some quarters this is still being perpetuated and directed against the parish council, our District Councillor and our Clerk. The parish council simply followed its policy of supporting Rother's attempts to preserve our shops. In this case we were unsuccessful but the policy helped us to retain the former newsagents premises in Station Road.

In the summer we were successful in our bid for £50,000 to provide play equipment for teenagers under the Government's Play Pathfinder Scheme. Consultation was carried out with young people in the village and after site visits by the Consultants administering the scheme in East Sussex our bid was approved. The village was very lucky indeed to get this money – only £240,000 was available for the whole of Rother, so our allocation was substantial. But unfortunately even this has caused controversy with the cricket club objecting to the site because of the danger posed by their activities. However, we have now secured a grant of nearly £3000 to help them fulfil their obligations.

In the autumn a successful exhibition and demonstration of the flood defences was organised by the Environment Agency with the support of the parish council. Residents were suitably reassured by the professionalism of the EA team which was to become more apparent in the winter when two near flood conditions occurred.

In January the village was severely affected by the worst snow falls for many years. There was inevitable disruption as many side roads in the village remained un-gritted. We have been in discussions with East Sussex Highways department but they no longer provide grit bins and the parish council would have to pay for them out of its precept – some £5-600 each, a large outlay from our already stretched budget but we will continue to explore what can be done. What was good in this time of trouble was to see the village pulling together and to see how residents appreciated our local shops. But they can't survive on just the business created during times of trouble so if we want to keep them we have to give them at least a bit of our custom.

In January the Council spent much time considering its response to the Rother Local Development Framework, Core Strategy which will set the framework for the future development of the District until 2026. Full details of our response can be seen on the Rother web site or in the Parish Office but essentially whilst realising that some changes will occur we want to ensure that they are changes we want.

Our Newsletter cost about 10p per copy to produce and has continued to be delivered by a small band of volunteers and we are very grateful for that but we would like to hear your views on the Newsletter – good or bad – Is it useful? What would you like to see in it? Let me or the Clerk know, it is after all for your benefit.

My thanks to our PCSO, Tina Grevett 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.

It has been a busy year and I would like to thank our Councillors, our County Councillor Peter Jones and our District Councillor George Hearn for their help and a special thank you to Cllr. Sue Prochak who continues to work tirelessly for the village and to our Clerk, Karen, who always gives the village 110% of her attention and is often at the sharp end of complaints.

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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Mrs Karen Ripley

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Web address:

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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

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www.rother.gov.uk

Parish Councillors

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National Bike Week 13th-21st June is the biggest nationwide cycling event in the UK. A celebration of cycling, Bike Week helps you get more out of life – by getting on your bike to explore the area in which you live. This year Bike Week is focusing on encouraging families to take up cycling as a regular activity in their local community.

Cycling has been proven to be the best outdoor activity to promote health and fitness. You'll be saving pounds by leaving your car behind and helping to save the environment at the same time!



To encourage people to get out on their bikes in Robertsbridge a variety of events are being organised for National Bike Week

Saturday 13th June 9.30 from the George Pub Mens Cycling Get-together

A leisurely ride to Bodiam Castle for coffee – approx 10 miles return. Tel John on 881530;
email john@uwclub.net

Saturday 13th June 2.30 from the George Pub Ladies Cycling Get-together

A leisurely ride via Redlands Lane to Salehurst for afternoon tea – 2-3 miles round trip with an optional extra loop for the more energetic! Tel Denise on 881530,
email; denise.cyclesafe@yahoo.co.uk

Monday 15th –19th June Salehurst and Robertsbridge Community College Pedal for the Planet Week. Year 6, 7 and 8 school children who have taken a cycling proficiency course will be encouraged to cycle into school and there will be opportunities for years 4-5 to take their bikes into school for a fun afternoon of bike games and activities.

HELP REQUIRED FOR THE YEAR 6, 7 AND 8 EVENT

We need as many people as possible out on the pavements to support and help ensure our children get into school safely. Please contact **Denise** if you can spare half an hour between 8.30-9, all, or some mornings that week.

Signs will also be put out to warn motorists of the event so if you are travelling by car through Robertsbridge at that time, please take extra care and watch your speed.!

Sunday 21st June Mid-summers Event 12.30-4.30

Participate in National Bike Week by riding your bike to the Mid-summers Event on the recreation ground for some fun bike games for all ages.