



NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 Issue 3

December 2010

Can you help please?

We need a volunteer to deliver the Newsletter to Oakland Drive. If you can help please Contact the Clerk or Cllr. David Allen



We wish all residents a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

Dates for your diary 2011

Planning Meeting Youth Centre	6th January
Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	17th January
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	3rd February
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	3rd March
Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	21st March
Planning Meeting Youth Centre	7th April
Annual Parish Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	11th April

WE NEED YOUR VIEWS!

The Parish Council is facing some difficult decisions on street lighting.

An EU directive is expected to require the withdrawal of all mercury based lamps by 2012. Manufacturers are already anticipating this change and are stopping the manufacture of these bulbs and this will mean that eventually it will be impossible to replace them. Currently we still have 63 mercury lamps and to replace them all (this involves changing the lamp housing as well) would cost around £12,000!

Faced with this the Council has reluctantly agreed to raise a loan over 5 years to cover the cost of replacement - we have been able to make some savings in our budget to cover the cost of repayment of the loan which means there will be no increase in the precept to cover this.

However, there are other areas where we could save money but we would like your views on these. Some of you may already be aware that East Sussex CC in line with a number of other authorities is considering turning off street lights to save money. This will not immediately affect our parish because our street lights (other than those on the bypass which are the responsibility of Highways Agency) are paid for by the parish. However, the potential savings that could be made in electricity costs mean that the Parish may need to consider this as an option.

Currently we have 76 lights on all night and 14 part-night (**on at dusk, off at midnight, on 5am off at daylight - note this is a fixed schedule and cannot be adjusted on an individual lamp basis**). The Council is considering leaving the lights in Station Road and the High Street, Clapper, George Hill area - the main 'arteries' of the village - on all night but changing **ALL** other lights to part-night as the above schedule. This could result in a potential saving in electricity costs of around £1000 per year.

What do you think of this idea?

Secondly, we currently require our maintenance company to provide white lamps in all our lights but these cost approximately £20 extra per bulb compared to 'golden' lamps (less brash than the ones on the bypass). Also, the white bulbs last approximately 2 years whereas the 'golden' ones approximately 3 years. This obviously has an impact on our costs. An example of a 'golden' lamp can be seen at the bottom of Kemps Way.

What do you think of the idea of changing our lights to 'golden' bulbs?

It would be most cost effective to change the timing of the lights when the lanterns are changed and we will need to make a decision at our **January meeting** but we would like to hear your views on these matters; please write to or email the Clerk.

Note: Meetings of the full Council now take place on the 3rd Monday of alternate months.

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

Grit Bins - The grit bins which the Parish has paid for should hopefully be in place by the time this Newsletter gets to you. Please remember that the grit is provided for use on roads and pavements and **NOT** for use on private property - residents should make their own provision for that. Bags of grit can be bought at Culverwell's or Builder Center and it is worth buying early and not waiting until the snow and ice arrive! - if they haven't got it in stock then they will order it for you.

Local Action Plan - update

Gateways to calm traffic and create a 'sense of place' - One of the main projects from the local action plan was to slow down traffic as it enters the village. Those who responded to the survey were not keen to see "sleeping policemen" and "traffic islands".

A solution we are pursuing is "village gateways". You will see these now for many villages across the country. They usually involve some kind of wooden fencing – often including the speed limit sign. The theory of these is that it attracts attention to the fact that the driver is entering a residential area, with a speed limit. These fences also give the illusion of narrowing the road, which again can influence speed.

The plan is for these gateways to enhance the entrance to the village, and generally upgrade the appearance of the village. Sadly the existing signs are discoloured and cracked in places.

Some villages have also used their gateways to develop a "sense of place", such as "Gateway to the Downs" or "Home of motoring" or "Bronte Country" etc. We are hoping that Gray Nicholls will be happy to incorporate cricket bats into the design for Robertsbridge. There is also a possibility that we may be able to incorporate the old style metal village signs, with the Sussex coat of arms into the design.

We are only in the concept stage and all ideas and comments are welcome. Please send to tamara.strapp@salehurst-pc.org.uk. We are hoping to have quotes and designs by February.

See also item on Speed control on opposite page

Robertsbridge Freecycle?

There is a worldwide Freecycle Network. It is a grassroots movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns and villages. Freecycle groups match people who have things they want to get rid of with people who can use them. The goal is to keep usable items out of landfills. By using what we already have on this earth, we reduce consumerism, manufacture fewer goods, and lessen the impact on the earth. Another benefit of using Freecycle is that it encourages us to get rid of junk that we no longer need and promote community involvement in the process.

There are already Freecycle websites for Tunbridge Wells, Hastings and Hurst Green. Further information www.uk.freecycle.org or <http://groups.freecycle.org/hastings-freecycle/description>

If anyone would like to set up a group for Robertsbridge we would be delighted!

Bishop's Meadow - The land bridge connecting the two parts of the meadow has now been constructed and surfaced with road chippings which will 'green up' over time. The new area has received its first mowing.

The trees offered by Woodland Trust arrived at the beginning of November and Peter Massini will organize a volunteer work day to plant them around the meadow but especially on the new bund along Bishop's Lane. The grass on the bund has now grown and it has 'greened up' nicely. The Darvell community have offered to help with the planting and any other volunteers will be welcome - watch for announcement of dates. If sufficient volunteers are available then the fence between the new area and the Licensed path to Glottenham will be removed at the same time.

The incorporation of the area has taken longer than anticipated due partly to the dry summer but also to shortage of funds now alleviated to some extent by a grant from the Rother DC Community Grant Scheme. By next season the area should be fully accessible and will become a valuable extension to the amenity of the main Meadow.

A number of residents have questioned why the picnic bench near the children's play equipment has been removed. This was done at the request of nearby residents who complained that the bench was being used by young (and not so young!) people as a gathering place, some times into the early hours and creating a nuisance. Very reluctantly, the Parish Council agreed to the removal of the bench which has now been re-located into the play area at the recreation ground.

CycleRobertsbridge in full Swing!

Since the joint CycleRobertsbridge and CycleBattle's successful launch in January when 24 turned up, keen to pedal off their over indulgence at Christmas, more and more locals have been dusting down their bikes to come out and enjoy the tracks and lanes of our local countryside.

Between 6-10 people turned up for the Summer evening rides from the Ostrich on a Monday night. Then a good crowd joined our rides to Bodiam in June to celebrate National Bike Week - a hilly circular ride for the enthusiasts and a flatter ride along bridleways and tracks for those who preferred to take things more leisurely.

To get children pedalling, a family off-road ride from Rye was organised in July. Several families enjoyed an open bridleway past Camber Castle through to Winchelsea Beach for an ice cream and paddle then along the nature reserve track to Rye Harbour for lunch.

With the arrival of Hannes a keen mountainbiker from South Africa, the club now has a thriving mountain bike group, (Mounties) with up to 14 adults and youngsters braving the mud and slosh on a Saturday morning!

Next year.....well an even bigger programme is planned. So if you're inspired to take to two wheels, get fitter and enjoy good company, check out our website www.CycleBattle.co.uk which will give you details of rides, membership, meetings and photos of this years activities, or have a chat with either Denise on 07729999427 or Hannes (Mounties) on 01580 881248.

Making Tracks - We have some fabulous footpaths within our parish which enable you to see our village and community from many different perspectives. What better way is there to experience this glorious Sussex countryside we are so fortunate to live in than to walk, unhindered, through it?

A recent survey of our network of footpaths was undertaken by East Sussex County Council. I am currently assessing the state of each footpath based on the information provided by ESCC. There are a number of issues arising from the survey, some of which are relatively minor things like way markers that need attention or replacing. Some areas of footpath are densely overgrown and there are gates and stiles that need repairing or replacing.

I would like to form a group of volunteers willing to help maintain the footpaths that we enjoy. The only requirement is that you should be relatively fit and willing. ESCC Rights of Way and Countryside Management Team provides support to volunteer groups and will provide us with most of the things we need including some training.

Once we have some volunteers I propose that we meet and I will be able to tell you more about the scheme. You can then decide if it's something you would enjoy and in which you would like to become involved. We can decide exactly what tasks we are capable of undertaking, how much time we can devote each month and who will lead this volunteer group and liaise with ESCC.

To quote from an ESCC leaflet on the subject "Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, keep yourself fit and have a bit of fun." Those of you who know me will know that I'm keen on the fun bit and that I do enjoy the countryside. I've been out with the Rights of Way Team working on part of the Cuckoo Trail and I must say that I enjoyed it very much.

So, if you are keen to see more of our immediate countryside and are willing to provide some time and energy then why not get in touch with me, my details appear on the back of this newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Charlie Beeden

Speed Control - In August the Parish Council was asked if any Councillors could spare time to help the Police with their Speed Monitoring initiative and Cllrs. Allen & Beeden agreed.

Cllr. Beeden spent an interesting hour in Station Road with PC Simon Knight between 7 and 8am. Talking about his work on speed control Simon said that many of the people he pulls over are local people who admit that they know the road well. Many have got the radio on or are talking to passengers and the speed just gradually builds up, especially on familiar roads. Within about 45 minutes Simon had pulled two drivers over for exceeding the speed limit and, as he had predicted, both were local people and one admitted their concern over speeding vehicles but the vast majority of that hour's volume of traffic stayed within the speed limit.

Later in the week, Cllr. Allen spent some time with the police on George Hill but again most vehicles were being driven within the speed limit although it was interesting to see how much braking occurred when the police car was spotted!

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:

Mrs Karen Ripley

The Parish Office
Robertsbridge Youth Centre
The Grove, George Hill

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

Parish Councillors

Tel:

Cllr Tamara Strapp (Chair) 881291
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Cllr George Hearn 819233
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Cllr Susan Prochak 881309
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Parking Problems - It seems that a number of people are still not aware of the purpose of the double white lines down the centre of the road above and below the level crossing. They are there to protect the level crossing from becoming blocked by traffic held up by vehicles parking in these places.

There are numerous occasions when drivers park there all day causing particular problems when the school buses are around. One driver recently left their car there from Saturday morning until the following Friday evening - had they gone on holiday?



Double white lines,
see Rules 128 and 129

The Highway Code makes it quite clear - *You **MUST NOT** stop or park on a road marked with double white lines (and that applies even if one of the lines is broken).*

As well as creating a danger to other road users, you risk a fine of up to £60 and 2 penalty points - Please don't do it!

Robertsbridge & District Archaeological Society

RADAS (Your local history group) was formed in 1962 and is therefore due to mark its 50th Anniversary in 2012 an excellent achievement. The Society has a flourishing membership and holds 7 meetings a year plus a members only social evening in December and usually organizes 1 or 2 outings each year. With the exception of the Christmas social evening, all meetings are open to the public. There is no charge but a collection is held at the end of the evening to help defray expenses - speaker fee, hall hire etc.

Why not come along? The meetings still to come this season are:

January 14th - Neither Town nor Country Houses in the Local Village - David Martin

February 11th - The Tale of Beatrix Potter - Heather Woodward

March 11th - Tom Crean - Mike Smith

April 8th - The Black Death - Imogen Corrigan

May 13th - History and Early People of Sussex - Peter Brandon

This meeting includes the (short) AGM!

Meetings are held in Robertsbridge Hall and start at 7.45pm

How do you fly a kite when there is no wind? The answer is with great difficulty but a lot of fun as the kite flying day at Bishop's Meadow showed. A good number of young and old turned out including children from Salehurst Primary school who had made kites at school.

The Summer Events Committee organised the day and provided much appreciated refreshments which contributed to a small profit towards their next event

Just a thought from Mark Twain, who died 100 years ago - *"Better to keep silent and be thought a fool than speak and remove all doubt"*