



NEWSLETTER

Dates for your diary 2014

Planning Committee	3rd April
Youth Centre	
Parish Assembly	28th April
Robertsbridge Hall	
Planning Committee	1st May
Youth Centre	
Parish Council Meeting	19th May
Robertsbridge Hall	
Planning Committee	5th June
Youth Centre	(to be confirmed)
Robertsbridge Summer Event	22nd June More details on back page



Hopefully, by the time you receive this Spring really will be here! It has been a long, wet winter and our flood defences have had some challenges but have met them admirably.

At Christmas it became necessary to partially close the roads with the barriers but fortunately the river surge and the high tide did not coincide and it wasn't necessary to fully install the barriers but, it was a close thing.

Our sympathies are with those suffering in other parts of the country but whatever the criticisms in the press and from others who should know better, our Environment Agency teams provided, as always, a professional and dedicated service - we must remember that they are often around at night and in the early hours when most of us are tucked up in bed!

Hopefully too, by the time you read this, the trains will be back to normal; not just good news for our many commuters – we will all be pleased to see an end to so many buses! We are also pressing ESCC hard for more pothole repairs and attention to numerous blocked drains (particularly George Hill).

COUNCIL TAX

It's that time of year again when council tax is reviewed before bills are sent by Rother District Council to all residents.

We are pleased this year to announce that we are able to freeze the Parish Council element at the same amount as last year, and Rother District Council has also announced a freeze. However, we are aware that bills will rise for the forthcoming financial year with East Sussex County Council, the Police and Fire Service all announcing small increases.

Note: Meetings of the full Council now take place on the 3rd Monday of alternate months. Planning Committee meetings are held monthly if applications are submitted.

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

OLDWOOD SURGERY PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

The Oldwood Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG) was established a year ago as part of an on-going programme aimed at improving and developing quality health care services for the benefit of patients of the Battle and Robertsbridge Surgeries.

The PPG meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 6 until 7pm to hear patients' suggestions. Ideas that will benefit patients are forwarded to Doctors, Nurses and Staff and other community health workers and organisations concerned with patients' health and well-being for consideration. The PPG has been pleased and encouraged by the number of really good and practical recommendations put forward.

If you have an idea that might help you, your family and other patients, please put your written suggestion into the Prescription Box addressed 'PPG'.

The PPG committee welcomes new members – or visitors – to their monthly meetings. If you would like to become involved, would you kindly call Lina Cahill, Practice Manager on 01580 880790 for more details.

New Housing in Robertsbridge

Housing in Salehurst and Robertsbridge has become a much spoken about topic in recent months. You will know, if you read the recent interim S&RPC Newsletter, that as a Parish, we have been allocated to take 155 new houses by 2028 (in the Rother District Council Local Plan 2011 – 2028, which is currently being drawn up). This is something that has been set upon us and whilst we have been able to comment to keep this figure as low as possible, Rother District Council has a legal obligation to ensure that provision is made for 1,670 new dwellings to be built across the District in that time. There are 3 significant sites in our Parish that have already been designated (since 2006 or earlier) as suitable for development:

- Grove Farm, east of George Hill (above Salehurst Primary School)

- Land behind Culverwells, off Station Road

- The old Country Crafts site, west of George Hill (between George Close and Blenheim Court).

Of these, Grove Farm was designated for 30 dwellings; the Old Country Crafts site was granted permission in 2008 for a mixed development of 9 self-contained flats and office/light industrial commercial space; the land behind Culverwells has recently been the subject of an outline application for 17 dwellings and some commercial space; all of these count towards the 155.

The old Mill Site on Northbridge Street was not available when the 2006 Local Plan was drawn up, so it is still currently designated as a commercial site, but the new Local Plan will seek designation as a mixed use site, for some commercial and some housing.

Social media has been used a lot in the village recently, with many commenting that the old Mill Site, as a brown-field site, should be built on first, but each site is under different ownership and it is not possible to make the developers build at a certain time or to prescribe in which order the building would take place. Each site's planning will also be considered on its own merits, so it is not possible to have one site wholly for residential for example.

The Parish Council is acutely aware that many people in the village do not want to see a significant number of houses built in their village, however by law, these houses must be built somewhere. The role of S&RPC is to ensure that where building does take place it is in the best interests of the village with the least impact on the surrounding area and where possible to ensure that any indirect benefits are explored.

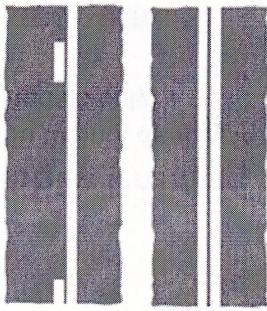
Later this year work will commence on 'site allocations', or which areas of land are suitable for development. There will be public consultation on this and you will have an opportunity to have some input into the process. We will keep you informed of progress on this.

All planning applications, including large ones, are presented to the Parish Council for comment but the overall granting of planning permission rests with Rother District Council. The Parish Council holds planning meetings once a month to consider any applications received and members of the public are welcome to attend, pass comment and listen to the Members discuss the applications.

Flair Festival 2014

After the success of the first year, we're hoping to hold another Flair Festival this year. This time the main competition day will be Saturday 17th May to avoid clashes with East Sussex Music Service concerts. Our main theme will be steam trains and we're hoping this will inspire some original poetry, stories and art as well as some imaginative interpretations of well known songs and music.

While some of our adjudicators from last year are available and able to help again, we might need assistance in some areas, particularly choirs and individual singing. We would also welcome any contributions in regards to possible workshops. In addition, if you can provide any help, advice or ideas, please do get in touch with Amanda McIntyre, Festival Secretary on 01580 881234 or seanandamanda6366@btinternet.com.



Double white lines
See Rules 128 and 129

Many drivers are apparently unaware of the law relating to double white lines down the centre of the road. This can cause serious problems above and below the level crossing when drivers park and leave their vehicles which causes an obstruction at the crossing - this despite the signs pointing out that that it is an offence to park there.

Some drivers believe that it alright to park opposite the broken line but this is not so

The Highway Code states that - ***You MUST NOT stop or park on a road marked with double white lines, even when a broken white line is on your side of the road, except to pick up or set down passengers, or to load or unload goods.***

These lines are put there to prevent obstruction to the level crossing. There have been numerous occasions at busy time when vehicles have been forced to stop on the crossing which could potentially have very serious consequences. Because of recent problems the police are in future going to be more proactive in issuing penalty tickets.

The question has been asked “Why not put double yellow lines?” “The reason apparently is that it would then be legal for disabled drivers to park!- now it is not.!”

Street Lights – replacements and upgrades...

You may have noticed that some of our streetlights now have different colour lamps, or perhaps a lamp near you switches off around midnight when it used to burn all night? Fairly extensive upgrades have taken place on our streetlights over the past six weeks, with almost all of the old mercury based lanterns being replaced with new, far more efficient ones. Many of these have been burning all day for a while, so thank you for your patience if you had reported these to us. Two lanterns are still to be completed as they also need complete new posts; column 73 (outside no. 11 Fair Lane) will be completed in the next few weeks (dependent on UK Power Networks being available to do the mains connections) and column 90 (Andrews Close) will be changed next year (when funds allow).

Widespread consultation in 2011 indicated overwhelming support to change all lamps to the pale ‘golden’ ones (which are cheaper, use far less energy and last much longer) and to switch lanterns off at midnight in all but the ‘main arteries’ of the village – Station Road and A21 to A21 (George Hill, High Street, Clappers, Northbridge Street), where the lamps will stay on from dusk to dawn (please note this is a fixed schedule and cannot be adjusted on an individual lamp basis). All the timer changes have been completed over the last month and many of the lanterns now have golden lamps; the remaining white ones will be swapped as each lamp requires changing.

We have been asked why we are changing to golden lanterns now, when some local authorities (including East Sussex County Council) appear to be doing the opposite. This is because they are changing to LED lights, having been using the type we are moving to for some time. But LED street lighting is still relatively new and therefore very expensive to install. Large authorities have the benefit of economies of scale, but the price quite simply precludes us from doing it. Also, LED lights are not so effective in terms of ‘downward spread’ of light, so not as effective in situations like ours, where lanterns are widely spaced. However, we have ensured that our new lanterns are able to be converted in future years, if and when LED becomes more widely used and therefore cheaper. In the meantime, our new lanterns will be hugely more efficient than the old ones, and this will be reflected in our energy savings – good in terms of the environment and our pockets.

The Annual Parish Meeting this year will be on Monday 28th April – please put the date in your diary. If would like a table for your group or organisation please book this with the Clerk.

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:

Mrs Karen Ripley
Assitant Clerk
Mrs Angie Goodwin

The Parish Office
Robertsbridge Youth Centre
The Grove, George Hill
Robertsbridge TN32 5AP

Phone: 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: **(note new times)**

Tuesday 2pm to 4pm
Thursday 2pm to 4pm

Rother District Council

Web address: www.rother.gov.uk

Parish Councillors

Tel:

Cllr Dicky Clymo (Chair) 881563
dicky.clymo@salehurst-pc.org.uk

Cllr Nick Greenfield (vice-Chair) 880998
nick.greenfield@salehurst-pc.org.uk

Cllr Ruth Augarde 860149
ruth.augarde@salehurst-pc.org.uk

Cllr Neil Barden 880457
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Cllr Nigel Lockwood 882204
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Cllr Keith Marden 880536
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Cllr Sean O'Hara 881234
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East Sussex County Councillor

Cllr Angharad Davies 831965
cllr.angharad.davies@eastsussex.gov.uk

Rother District Councillors

Cllr Graham Browne 860118
cllr.Graham.browne@rother.gov.uk

Cllr Susan Prochak 881309
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The Robertsbridge Summer Event – 22nd June 2014 . The theme is the “Robertsbridge Generation Game”. Free fun for the whole village. Put it in your diary – it’s not to be missed!!



Broken stiles, muddy footpaths, overgrown hedges, blocked access - these are just a few of the complaints which are brought to the attention of the Footpaths & Byeways volunteer team to tackle and with the recent atrocious weather the jobs are beginning to pile, up waiting to be done. This year,

more than ever, more volunteers are needed to call upon to help out as these are community tasks which are out of the remit of outside agencies or authorities and reliant on the work of volunteers.

The village green spaces such as the Pocket Park, Bishops Meadow, Jubilee Gardens are also maintained by volunteers known as FORGe (friends of Robertsbridge green spaces) and they organise advertised task days for specific conservation work.

Please consider giving up some time to the upkeep and improvement of our countryside and local amenities and contact: Martin Bates for Footpaths & Byeways Volunteering (mpbates@hotmail.co.uk) and Peter Massini for FORGe (tel: 880353 petemassini@btinternet.com).

A21 / George Hill junction...

The Parish Council, like many residents, has been concerned about the number of road traffic collisions on the bypass (A21) and has gathered some statistics, which we share here for information. In the decade 2004 to 2013, on the A21 between the roundabout at the north of the village (A21, Northbridge St, Church Lane) and the roundabout at John's Cross (A21 & A2100) there have been 41 road traffic accidents involving a total of 75 casualties (as reported to the police). About a third (14 accidents with 26 casualties, of which 2 were fatal) took place at or close to the junction of George Hill with the A21. In 8 cases vehicles emerging out of George Hill onto the A21 were in collision with A21 vehicles travelling northbound. This junction has been identified by ESCC as having had four or more crashes within a 3-year period in its most recent review of crash sites in the county.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS

When you go shopping in one of the big supermarkets and are offered vouchers for schools, please always say 'yes'. Robertsbridge Community College, Salehurst Primary School and Robertsbridge Children's Services all collect the vouchers, so even if you don't have children yourself, please pass them to the school direct or to someone associated with the school; they will be very grateful! Nestle cereal 'Box Tops for Books' are also