

Ladies & Gentlemen,

A year ago when I concluded my address to the Parish Assembly I enumerated the problems then facing your Parish Council. You will remember that they were as follows:-

1. Provision of a Sports Field.
2. Restoration of the Pump House on the Village Green.
3. Maintenance of the Village Green.
4. Layout of the road around Faygate Corner to reduce Accidents.
5. A more progressive policy re Control over Planning Notification and Development within the parish.
6. A successor to the then Clerk of the Parish Council.

The provision of a Sports Field and the question of control over Planning Development are listed on the Agenda for detailed discussion later but as regards the other problems I can report as under:-

Restoration of the Pump House on the Village Green. I have heard a little criticism that the Horsham Slab tiles had been exchanged for old red peg tiles. The reason why the heavy old Horsham slabs were not replaced was due to their condition, the thickness being uneven and the peg holes having worn very wide. In addition they would have had to be set in concrete to make the roof watertight. This would have been expensive and ^{no} damage from frost could not be guaranteed. In view of the past severe weather it is almost certain that the Horsham slab roof would not have stood up to the exceptionally heavy frost and cold experienced since Xmas.

I think you will agree that the contractor, Denis Thomas, has made a good job of the restoration work. I, for one, feel that the red peg tile roof is more in keeping with the buildings surrounding the Village Green than ^{is} a Horsham slab roof. Total cost which includes a credit of £ 15 for the sale of the Horsham slabs was £ 329-16-0. This was paid by means of a special precept of 4d. in the £ realising £ 188 and the balance from ~~fund~~ the general fund at credit of the Parish Council.

Maintenance of the Village Green. During 1962/63 the village green has been maintained in a good condition, work for which was contracted through Mr. Campbell whose hard work has been much appreciated. I am glad to say that he has consented to continue his contract for 1963 summer. I would emphasize that to keep the Village Green in good order and to keep it clear of litter costs money but your Council considers the money well spent.

Our great concern is that of damage being done to the Village Green. Warning notices to stop vehicles parking on and traversing the edges of the Green are in position but unfortunately this does not prevent certain vandals from driving their vehicles across parts which causes deep ruts and unsightly damage. In the summer when the ground is hard the damage is slight but when the ground is soft the damage is extensive and most unsightly. Your Council is fully prepared to prosecute when such damage is done but this action can only be taken provided witnesses come forward and give evidence. If you see any driver causing this type of damage please take the number of the vehicle and also, if possible, ask the driver for his name and who is the owner of the vehicle. If you can then report these details to the Clerk of the Parish your Council can then take the matter up and prosecute if necessary. I feel sure that prosecution is the only way to prevent certain lazy and care-less drivers from taking a chance to do wilful damage to the Village Green.

Other damage, no less as great because it is not so noticeable, is the almost imperceptible erosion of the boundaries of the Village Green due to the ever increase of road traffic. Your Parish Council's policy is to spend up to £ 50 per annum in carrying out curbing of the main boundaries but cost is high about £ 7 per yard. During 1962/63 a contract has been given to F. Thomas and Sons to curb the small piece of Green opposite Barrack Cottages. Here on the corner some 4 ft. of the Green has been eaten away by traffic. This work has to have the approval of the East Sussex County Surveyor so what with the bad weather etc. work has not yet started but it is hoped it will in the near future.

Paygate Corner. Your Parish Council continues to press vigorously for a new road layout at the junction of A229 and B2091 ~~but the present layout is a~~ as the potential of road accident hazard remains abnormally high.

Representations have been made both to local and central authorities but with little success. All that has resulted is a suggestion by the East Sussex County Surveyor that he hopes to erect sometime "a gantry sign of the type used on Expressways in the U.S.A." on the B2091. This would span the road and be 16ft. high. Delivery date is uncertain but such an erection would hardly add to the beauties of the countryside. Local police consider that road signs at dangerous junctions are of little use as the driving public tend to ignore them.

The present layout at Paygate junction cost £ 7,000 in 1957.

- The ample visibility makes the accident hazard all the more unusual and is
- almost certainly due to the recent practice of diverting the main A21 road traffic along the minor road B 2091 to avoid congestion in Battle High St. In addition there is running up to Paygate junction a fine stretch of B 2091 where people can and often do exceed 80 m.p.h. The result is that fast drivers reach Paygate junction before they really are aware of it and seeing a straight piece of road ahead drive right across under the mistaken impression they have right of way, and not joining a major road from a minor road. Thus one has the potentially dangerous situation of two drivers having ~~the~~ to cross each others path and each thinking he has right of way. At fast speeds this can only lead to serious accidents. Moreover, some drivers are prepared "to take a chance" instead of giving way as they ought.

The local police from hard experience consider road signs of little deterrent value at dangerous junctions. In cases like Paygate Corner it would seem that the only answer is a physical barrier so that at least one driver must slow down to under 10 m.p.h. or come to a halt. This can be done without much expense by the means of a "round-a-bout" or by making the B 2091 minor road into and A major road, with a Halt T. Junction. I personally favour the latter but apparently changing the status of a road is much more difficult than building a bye-pass.

One is appalled by the apathy and the poor arguments put forward to any constructive suggestions. "Round-a-bouts are out of fashion", "Halt signs can only be used where there are T Junctions", "No motorist pays any attention to road signs" and most quoted of all "Paygate junction is not a really dangerous accident hazard until someone has been killed". Your Council's aim is to prevent serious accidents occurring and not wait to do until after someone has been killed. We have experienced enough serious

Paygate Corner (con). accidents and "near misses" to make us believe that if the ~~present~~ present layout to Paygate Junction is not altered to meet the new road traffic conditions there must, in due course, be not one but many fatal accidents in the future.

Clerk to the Parish Council. A year ago the then Parish Council, Mr. Fred. Phillips, intimated that he wished to resign as he no longer resided in the Parish. His many years of devoted service on behalf of the Parish could hardly be equalled and I take this opportunity of expressing on your behalf the Council's appreciation of all Mr. Phillips has done on behalf of the Parish of Sedlescombe during his period of office as Clerk to the Parish Council.

I am happy to report that Miss P. Reeves kindly consented to take on the appointment of Clerk to the Parish Council and took up her duties from the 1st. October 1962. It is astounding how much work is involved in running a small parish. During the past year this has increased owing to your Council's efforts to find a new sports field, restore the Pump House on the Village Green and in other matters. We are, therefore, particularly fortunate that we now have such a hardworking and public spirited person like Miss Reeves to come forward and take over the onerous office of Clerk to the Parish Council.

Rates & Revaluation. The Parish rate levied during 1962/63 was 8d. in the £ due to an extra 4d. being sanctioned by a special precept to help cover the cost of the restoration of the Pump House on the Village Green. In the 1962/63 valuation a 1d rate produce £ 47.

From 1 April 1963 the new valuation list comes into force and over the whole of the Rural District the rateable value has increased from £ 405, 169 to £ 993, 311-- an increase of 145 %. As business premises were not increased pro rata private premises have increased well above the 145 %. In some cases net rateable value on private houses has gone up well over 200 %. The responsibility of revaluation figures depends solely on the Inland Revenue and objections to the rate valuation should be made to the Valuation Officer and not to the Rural or County authorities.

For 1963/64 the Battle Rural District Council has reduced its rate demand and they deserve our thanks and gratitude for having so ably stabilised their rate demand over the past few years. On the other hand the 1963/64 rate to be levied by the East Sussex County Council will be up $3/8\frac{1}{2}$ d in the £ on the old valuation, and 1/5d on the new valuation.

Rates & Revaluation (con.) This is a terrible rise and if you wish to protest you should write to your East Sussex County Council representative against such a sharp increase. It is not that one wishes to do away with social services or even to unnecessarily curtail them. Most of us feel that the ratepayer is not getting value for money especially as regards higher education. No one has yet satisfactorily explained why a day scholar at a large secondary school such as Claveringham costs nearly 40% more than at the more well known Public Schools. However, if you wish to object to the Poundage of your rates the matter should be taken up with your elected representative for the East Sussex County Council while the if you object to the revaluation figure now set on your house this should be taken up with the Valuation Officer of the Inland Revenue.

Parish Precept for 1963/64 The 1d. rate on the new revaluation will produce £ 116 as compared with £ 47 on the old valuation. Your Parish Council estimates its requirements as £ 232 on a 2d. rate on the new valuation as compared with 4d. rate on the old valuation. Last year a 4d. rate produced £ 188. Thus although the new valuation rate was dropped to 2d. the actual amount of money the parish has to find is some 24% more.

In effect the revaluation has the specious look of a reduction in rates but is in reality one has to pay more hard cash. This is the general effect on most rates all over the country. To effect a reduction one must lobby your elected representatives at all levels but mainly at county level where the biggest sums are spent.

Planning Development. A year ago this Parish Assembly overwhelmingly agreed to support the National Association's campaign for all Parish Councils to be officially informed as to any building or demolition which it is proposed to carry out within the parish. At the moment we can only obtain this information through the courtesy of our elected member on the Rural District Council.

The Battle District Association of Parish Councils has recently been considering a further approach to the Battle Rural District Council and to strengthen their position the Association has written to all Parish Councils in the Battle area to ask for resolutions to be passed supporting the National Association's Policy on "Control of Planning".

Unfortunately your Parish Councillors are not unanimous in wholeheartedly supporting this "Control of Planning" policy sponsored by the National Association. In view of the feeling of this Parish Assembly

Planning Development (con.) a year ago the question seems as simple as ever. Should parish councils be informed--not necessarily "consulted"--- re any planning applications made within their respective parishes? The answer is of course they should be so informed. Otherwise we are faced with a literally built up "fait accompli" through sheer ignorance as has happened not once in Sedlescombe Parish. It is much easier to oppose any development scheme at the planning stage than when it has been built and erected.

I propose therefore that this Parish Assembly give a clear indication to its Councillors on whether the National Association policy on "Control of Planning" should be supported or not. It seems to me only common sense that Planning Committees should afford Parish Councils the opportunity to object to any planning activities in their own parishes instead of the present rather furtive un businesslike methods. After all any member of the public is at liberty to inspect the Register of Applications at Rural District H.Qs. I cannot therefore see what the objection is to Parish Council being informed especially as this procedure is carried out quite successfully by other Rural District Councils. They do not complain it will make extra work so why cannot Battle Rural District Council keep the Parish Council properly informed. A little co-operation could easily solve the problem for it is not a matter of asking for powers to be delegated but for information to be given.

New Sports Field. During 1962 your Council made strenuous efforts to find a field suitable for cricket and football but as you are aware proposals to exchange the Allotment Field for Sir John Keeling's field fell through as The District Valuer was unable to recommend the exchange owing to it being financially inequitable.

In the past three months an approach has been made to the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust for the purchase or lease of 7.09 acres of level land in the field adjoining the right bank of the river Brede and the main A229 road. I am happy to report that this approach was warmly welcomed and I take the opportunity of saying how grateful the Parish Council is to the warden Mr. Spencer-Gayman and his colleagues for co-operating so sincerely with the Parish Council on this matter. Their willing help is much appreciated.

As far back as the 2nd. May 1955 Sedlescombe Parish Council was granted outline planning permission for recreational purposes of the 7 acres now offered us by the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust. This

New Sports Field. This planning permission is still valid. In principle the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust is prepared to grant a 60 year lease with renewal clause of these 7 acres provided a Charitable Trust is set up with 5 Trustees of which 2 would be nominated by the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust, 2 would be Parish Councillors and a mutually agreed independent Chairman. These Trustees would have the power to set up a Managing Board of which two would be nominees by the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust, two nominated by the Parish Council and a representative of each organisation using the Sports Field.

In return for the 60 year lease for which no rent would be paid the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust would expect the Sedlescombe Parish Council to provide funds to develop the sports field i.e. to drain, level, seed, fence, provide a Pavilion etc. while the cost of maintenance would be borne by the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust, Sedlescombe Parish Council and by fees charged on the users of the Sports Field. Details of this suggested agreement is available for those interested.

Your Parish Council considers that the proposal is a generous one and the only field which is really suitable so near the village for cricket and football. No other suitable land is available which can meet the needs of the village so fully.

To carry out and implement these suggested proposals two motions are necessary to be carried. Firstly the Parish Assembly to authorise the sale of Allotment Field No. 172 of 4.507 acres to best advantage by the Sedlescombe Parish Council and secondly, that the Parish Assembly authorise the Parish Council to negotiate with the Trustees of the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust to set up a Charitable Trust to lease 7.09 acres Lot No. 300 of flat land at Oaklands adjoining the river Brede and main road A 229 for developing and maintaining a Sports Field for the use of Sedlescombe Village and the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust.