

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Chairman's Report to Sedlescombe Parish Assembly. 28th March, 1967.

For years I have expressed my alarm and grave concern at the ever increasing rise in the General Rate levied in this Parish of Sedlescombe. You will remember that four years ago rateable assessments as regards residential properties were roughly doubled and in 1963/64 the county rate alone jumped by 2/7¹/_d. You will also remember that every assurance was given that rates would be held down. But let us see what has actually happened.

As regards the Rural District Rate, ^{this} was 1/10¹/_d in 1964/65 and in 1967/68 is now 3/2 --- an increase of nearly 67%. During the same period the county Rate has increased from 7/5 to 8/10; an ^{IN 3 YEARS} increase of just over 19%. * Overall the general Rate has gone up from 9/3¹/_d to 12/-, an increase of nearly 29%. In simple terms this means your Rates will be doubled every three to four years, and this in spite of the fact that a 1d Rate increasing from £81,126 in 1964/65 to £ 86,692 in 1966/69, while from April 6th no income tax has to be paid by any local authority on income from any source.

Finally, the Chairman of the Finance and Staff Committee of the Battle R.D.C. is reported in the newspaper as saying:- I quote " At this time of financial stringency the considerable increase proposed is, to say the least more than regrettable, unfortunately however, in the circumstances, it is unavoidable. I would therefore be wrong to attempt to excuse it in any way."

Such an attitude is ~~deplorable~~ ^{DEPLORABLE} ---- the more ^{so} as the present Government has by law laid down that there is "a freeze" in both wages and prices. Apparently this does not apply to the Government itself; its Departments nor to Local Authorities. It is however, a matter between you, the ratepayer, and your elected member of the Rural District and County Councils. I make no apology in bringing forward this matter of ever increasing Rates to your notice as unrestricted spending of public money can only lead to serious financial problems to many of the ratepayers of this Parish.

* or 84% of 1963-64 figures are included.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Each year I continue to express grave concern over the ever continuing increase in the Rates. In 1966-67 the County rate increased 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ % while the Rural District Rate increased 12 %. For the coming 1967-68 year the County Rate will remain static but the Battle Rural District rate will go up from 2/4d. to 2/9d. i.e. an increase of just under 18 %. This in spite of a 5d. increase being paid out from a central Govt. grant. Both officials and elected members appear unanimous that such increases must automatically follow as a matter of course. The matter is between the rate-payers and the their elected members to the County and Rural District Councils so is outside the province of my review.

In 1966-67 Sedlescombe Parish Council levied a 2d. rate mainly to cover an abnormal grant to the Village Hall Trust but for 1967-68 a rate of only one penny will be levied. Keeping the parish rate down to such a low figure is only possible because of the interest earned from the investments now held by the Parish Council. This benefit has been further increased by the new finance act which permits Local Authorities, including parish councils to receive income exempt from Income Tax. Incidentally this must be of great financial benefit to Rural District and County Councils. Yet in spite of this appreciable windfall rates continue to soar.

Sedlescombe Parish Council's capital investments at present are as follows:-

	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Value @ March 67</u>
£ 3,635-8-8d. Exchequer 5 % Stock 1967	£	
£ 2,500 National Development Bonds 5 %	} 8,105	} £ 4405
£ 1,905 National Development Bonds 5 %		
£ 4405		

The £ 1,800 of ^{Bonds} 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ % Defence Bonds were encashed and re-invested in £ 1905 of 5 % Development ^{Bonds} during the year. Interest received was £ 325 on the equivalent of a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d rate. ^{BUT FOR THIS INCOME} To have carried what has been done during the year would have been outside the Parish Council's powers i.e. it would have been necessary to ask the Parish Assembly to sanction more than the 4d rate which Parish Councils have power to levy. It is for this reason that your Parish Council feels both strongly and unanimously that it bound to support a prudent financial policy of not frittering away its capital assets, the interest from which is available not only for ourselves to enjoy but also for the generations which come after us.

Financial Statement for 1965-66. The draft A/Cs put before you last year were passed without comment by the District Auditor.

Financial Statement 1966-67. Draft A/Cs for the year just finishing are now laid on the table for public inspection and detailed copies are also in your hands. For 1966-67 the more important items are as follows:-

<u>Income</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	
Opening Credit Bal.	..£. 210.....	Donations:-	
Gross Interest	..£. 326.....	(a) Village Hall ..£. 20.0	
<u>Precept</u>		(b) Children's Playground ..£. 25.	
Sundry Credits	£. 258.....	SPORTS FIELD RENT £ 150	
649	£ 794	Upkeep of Village Green ..£. 78.	
586		Footpaths ^{INCLUDING} SWIFFS ..£. 40.	
<u>£ 73</u>		Administration ..£. 96.	
		Credit Bal. B.F.£. 205.	
		<u>£ 794</u>	
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Total	£ 794	Total	£ 794.

In short your Parish Council estimated to spend £ 552 but actually spent £ 594 due to mainly to making an extra donation to the Village Hall Trust. Estimated income for 1966-67 was £ 649 but actually received was only £ 586 the difference being due to ~~Income Tax~~ ^{Income Tax} recovered in 1967-68.

Estimated Income and Expenditure for 1967-68. The details are given in the statements you now all have before you. With a ^{estimated} credit of £ ~~200~~ ²⁰⁶ to open the year plus £ 400 gross interest from investments and £ 147 being the value of a penny precept your Council will have a total of £ 747 available for 1967-68.

Estimated expenditure is at £ 540, details of which are in your hands and this will mean a carry over of a credit balance of £ 207 estimated at 5 April 1968. Main items of expenditure include £ 150 for rent of the Sports field; £ 100 towards the upkeep of the Village Hall; £ 25 for the upkeep of the children's playground; while £ 62 will be needed for the upkeep of the Village Green. Clerk's salary, postages, telephones and general administration are estimated to cost £ ~~106~~ ¹⁰⁶ plus £ 50 for footpaths ^{contingencies} £ 47.

These, Ladies & Gentlemen, are the proposals re Income and Expenditure your Parish Council makes for 1967-68. Would someone please propose and second that these draft Estimates for 1967-68 be adopted after which they may be talked to from the floor?

Sedlescombe Village Green.

Widening of Brede Lane.

) The proposed new layout across the Village Gr
) and the widening of Brede Lane has been postpo-
-ed indefinitely owing to financial cuts made
by the present ~~Govt.~~ Govt. The work should have started over a year ago
but now it is doubtful if such work can seriously be contemplated for years.

Your Parish Council has always pressed for the widening of
Brede Lane to avoid the rapidly growing ^{ACCIDENT} hazard potential to pedestrians but
all reference to the Highway Authority is met with a bland reply of "no ~~more~~
funds". It is a matter which you ratepayers should take up with your
member elected to the East Sussex County Council. The Parish Council has
no power in the matter.

New Sports Field.

The Agreement between the Parish Council and the Pesta-
-lozzi Children's Village Trust signed on 12 June 1964 has now been fully
implemented. I am sure that all will agree that the new Sports Field ~~is~~
in use for Saturdays and Sundays ^{ONLY} is an excellent one set in beautiful
surroundings. It is now being used by both the football and cricket clubs.
During the past year these two clubs have paid no rent owing to their incur-
-ring heavy expenses in moving to the new field. However, in 1967-68 it is
the intention that both clubs should contribute rent at a figure to be
negotiated and such sums will offset to some extent the £ 150 per annum rent
paid by the Parish Council to the Pestalozzi Trust.

During the ~~year~~ past year there were a number of "teething
troubles" mainly about maintenance of the field but these have generally
been overcome and it is hoped that arrangements will run even smoother in
1967-68.

Footpaths

Four small concrete sign posts were erected in 1966-67 to indica-
-te exit and entry of public footpaths from main roads and four more have ~~been~~
been budgetted for in 1967-68. ^{Repair, also four have been carried out of which are generally for the C.C.} I would emphasise that these sign-posts are
for the benefit of ratepayers and visitors to the parish and that the site
of each sign-post is decided only after consultation with the East Sussex
County Council authorities.

Planning Notification.

Parish Council Associations continue to press for
parish councils to be given notice of all planning applications when they
are made. Many planning authorities do willingly give such notice which is
not confidential. However, such is not the case with the Rural District
Council of Battle. The Battle District Association of Parish Councils is,
however, writing to every elected Rural District Council member asking for

Planning Notification (con). for his support to bring the matter to ~~the~~
~~the~~ the floor of the Council. If he is not prepared to give such support
 he will be requested to give his reason therefor. It will be interesting
 to see the result of such ~~reasonable~~ ^{or} reasonable request.
Registers of Village Green Has been registered & map & document available to public
General. Your Parish Council has had a comparatively quiet and uneventful
 year but in spite of this many local problems have been discussed, considered
 and decided upon.

I would like to mention how sad we are that Mrs. Haddon is
 leaving us. For a number of years she was ^a Parish Councillor and was also
 closely connected with the Village Hall Trust of which she has been Chairman
 for the past three or four years. It has been mainly to her efforts that
 the finances of the Village Hall are now on an even keel. We also remember
 how much she and her late husband did for the Village of Sedlescombe and
 also the munificent gift of the fine oak seats now installed in the Village
 Green Pump House as a memorial to Major Haddon. Not only the parish
 councillors but all those living in the parish of Sedlescombe will sadly
 miss ~~her~~ ^{MRS HADDON} and we all wish her the best of happiness in her new home.

Before I conclude my report, Ladies & Gentlemen, I know your
 Parish Council would like me to express our grateful thanks to your admir-
 -able Clerk to the Parish, Miss P. Reeves. Parish administration has great-
 -ly increased during the past few years and we would be in great difficulty
 but for Miss Reeves and the hard work she so willingly carries out.

I wish also to thank the Deputy Chairman, Dr. Wright, for his
 constant support during the past year. My grateful thanks are also due to
 the other parish councillors and to the sub-committees they form for their
 ever ready help.

In May of this year the rate-payers of Sedlescombe Parish have
 the chance to re-elect not only a new set of Parish Councillors but also
 their member to the Rural District Council of Battle and also to the East
 Sussex County Council. As regards the Parish Council normally there are
 no elections owing to lack of nominations. I personally feel that it is a
 pity that the younger generation does not come forward to serve on the
 Parish Council. Now that the village is expanding rapidly I trust that we
 shall receive an influx of "young blood" and in May next, perhaps, we shall
 receive more nominations than there are seats. It would be a healthy sign
 if we did. I thus end my report on this note. Would someone please
 propose & second my report after which the floor can be invited to comment?

Sedlescombe Playing Fields Trust - Tennis Courts. The Chairman of this Trust, Mr. Pugh, has circulated a note on the history of the tennis courts which are now in a neglected and parlous state. The tennis club is now moribund. I therefore now invite Mr. Pugh to address the Assembly to give an account of what went wrong with the tennis club and to give any suggestions that could result in the Sedlescombe Playing Field Trust in carrying out its proper functions. Mr. Pugh :-

Street Lighting. The proposal to have some form of street lighting in the parish of Sedlescombe has been mooted before but has been rejected for various reasons mainly on account of the cost of installation and of maintenance. However, the Rev. M. Barry has asked for this rather controversial subject to be once again aired and so I invite him to address the meeting:- The Rev. M.A. Barry: -

Car Park. The parking of cars on the roads across the Village Green has now reached at certain times such proportions of chaos that sometimes it is impossible for a vehicle to move down the side roads and on occasions ~~it~~ the same applies to a pedestrian.

In consequence the Parish Council wrote asking for the Village Green's new layout be urgently implemented; that traffic restrictions be considered and that a car park be made below the old Tithe Barn together with a bus pull-off, shelter and public convenience. No fewer than three separate authorities had to be consulted. The East Sussex County Council re implementing the new layout of the Village Green promised two years ago and of the widening of ~~the~~ Brede Lane; the Highway Authority re traffic restrictions and the Battle Rural District Council re provision of a public convenience and of a car park.

Replies to our requests brought definite negatives, owing to lack of funds, to all but the provision of a Car Park, which the Rural District Council of Battle considered ~~it~~ better to site at the bottom of Brede Lane in land above and adjoining the Queen's Head Inn. Your Parish Council has no further information on the matter which is really one for your elected member; so in consequence I invite Dr. Wright to say a few words on the matter as provisions of car parks are outside the statutory powers of parish Councils.

Any other Business - Thanks to Anewby for attending