

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Rates continue to soar inspite of promises given in past years. To appreciate just how much this is so the Rural District rate for Battle has gone up from 1/10³d in 1964-65 to 3/7d in 1968-69 while over the same period the County rate has increased from 7/5d. to 9/1d. Overall this means an increase from 9/3¹d to 12/8d - an increase of over 36%, the greater part being in the district rate.

By contrast your Parish rate has not so increased and ~~it was~~ for 1968-69 ~~was~~ decided that no rate would be required. This has been possible only by the exemption of local authorities having to pay Income Tax on investment income and, of course, to the interest from investments of securities owned by the Parish Council plus also by some judicious re-investment of such securities to produce a larger income.

It was considered necessary to encash £ 1800 of 4¹/₂ % Defence Bonds and reinvest in 5 % National Development Bonds, during 1966-67 resulting in an increased income in 1967-68. Also the Parish Council's holding of £ 3635 stock of 5% Exchequer Stock 1967 matured and this was reinvested in £ 3801 stock Treasury Loan 6¹/₂ % 1995-98. The overall result increased your Parish Council's income from £ 402 in 1966-67 to £ 486 in 1967-68. This invested income represents very near the product of a 3d. rate and without it, it would, perhaps, have been necessary to levy at least a 3d. rate for 1967-68.

It is for this reason, so that everyone in the Parish can feel the benefit, that your Council considers itself bound to support a prudent financial policy of not frittering away its capital assets, the income from which is available, not only only for ourselves to enjoy, but also for the generations which come after us.

Financial Statement for 1966-67 The draft accounts put before you last year were passed without comment by the District auditor.

Financial Statement 1967-68 Draft accounts for the year just finishing are now laid on the table for public inspection and detailed copies are also in your hands. Your Parish Council had estimated to spend £ 540 but actually spent £ 557 as against £ 586 actually received during the year while the opening Credit Balance increased from £ 203 to £ 230.

Would someone please propose and second that these draft

accounts be adopted after which they may be spoken to from the floor of the meeting ?

Estimated Income & Expenditure for 1968-69 Details are given in the Statements you have before you. Excluding Petty Cash Balances these estimates open with a credit balance of £ 221 and income is estimated at £ 530 making a total available of £ 751 for the year. Expenditure is estimated at £ 550 leaving a credit balance of £ 201, exclusive of the Petty Cash, to carry forward on 5 April 1969.

Besides the normal cost of administration and upkeep of the Village Green a number of social organisations have received substantial help either by means of direct grants or by the Council paying for the facilities they enjoy. Included are the Football & Cricket Clubs, the Tennis Club, the Churchyard Fund and the Children's Playing Field etc. I am glad to report that the Village Hall Trust did not require financial aid during the past year.

I would emphasize that the policy of your Council has always been, and still is, to support any village organisation which is a viable proposition and which ultimately has a good chance of supporting itself by its own efforts. The Council, however, does feel that it is of little use to pour out money on activities which are not well supported and which cannot themselves generate adequate finances.

Would someone please propose on second that these draft estimates for 1968-69 be adopted after which they may be talked to from the floor ?

Sedlescombe Village Green I regret to say that implementation of the new Widening of Brede Lane layout across the Village Green and the widening of Brede Lane continued to be postponed. Promised to start in 1965; postponed till 1966; then relegated to 1971 and now promised for 1969, I fear little reliance can be placed upon the assurances of the East Sussex County Council. Moreover the Highway Authority is adamant against any form of speed restriction in Brede Lane. One thing is clear that if Brede Lane is not widened and ^{does not} have footways for pedestrians there will be a tragic accident. Your Council has warned the responsibility of such an accident will be on the shoulders of the East Sussex County ^{Council}. It is difficult to make stronger representations than your Council has already done.

Car Park The provision of a car park for the Village has been under active consideration by the R.D.C. Battle. Your Council has also asked for the

Car Park (con.) provision of a public convenience. These are the responsibility of the R.D.C. of Battle. As our Deputy Chairman is also your elected representative to the R.D.C. of Battle, I have much pleasure in inviting Dr. R. Wright, now on the platform with me to address the meeting in respect of these two items.

New Sports Field The Agreement between the Parish Council and the Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust has continued to function. During the past year the field has been used almost wholly by the Football & Cricket Clubs who pay a nominal £ 5 each per year for its use. The ratepayers are, thus, providing a very heavy subsidy for these two activities.

Maintenance of the field which is the responsibility of the Pestalozzi left much to be desired due mainly to the inadequate maintenance equipment provided. It is hoped matters will improve during 1968-69.

The question of providing proper changing facilities continues to concern your Council and although overtures were made to the Pestalozzi on this subject they were rebuffed. However, I have no doubt your Council will again consider ways and means of how this problem may be solved.

National Playing Fields Trust (Tennis Courts) Much controversy was engendered owing to the derelict condition of the hard tennis courts. Finally the Tennis Club decided to take on the onus of repairing and maintaining them. It was necessary to find willing helpers and cash and once this had been done your Parish Council donated £ 100 to the good work. We wish the Tennis Club well in their efforts to restore both the hard courts and the Tennis Club.

Planning Notification This hardy annual continues to plague us and the R.D.C. of Battle must now be one of the very few Planning Authorities which do not readily give this information to parish councils. In other areas such as the Chailey R.D.C. parish councils complain bitterly if not only plans are not provided to parish councils but also front and side elevations. This seems to me to be too demanding and in this Rural District we would be grateful to learn automatically of just planning applications made in our Parish.

However, a new Town and Country Planning Act is on the way and I have no doubt that it will contain a provision whereby all Parish Councils must be notified by Planning Authorities of all applications made in their respective parishes.

Footpaths Again four small concrete posts were erected in 1967-68 to indicate

Footpaths (con.) exit and entry of public footpaths from main roads. Four more signposts are budgetted for in 1968-69. I would emphasize that these sign posts are erected only after consultation with the East Sussex County ~~Authority~~ Council who are the Authority for Footpaths and on whose land the signs posts are invariably sited.

New Notice Board. After a number of complaints had been made to your Council re the old notice board it was decided that a new one be erected. By the kind permission of Mr. Whyte of the Queen's Head this has been placed beside the Letter Box. The old notice board has been taken down and given to the Village Hall as they can make good use of it. Cost of the new Notice Board will be about £ 50 and has been budgetted for in the 1968-69 accounts. Its cost may seem high but it^{is} constructed wholly of oak and has been very well made. It should last the Village very many years with little, if no, maintenance costs.

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Before I conclude my report, Ladies & Gentlemen, I know your Parish Council would like me to express on your behalf their grateful thanks to your admirable Clerk to the Parish, Miss P. Reeves. During the past year a lot of heavy work has been thrown on her shoulders. Parish Council work has now become quite complex especially as legislation continues to be churned out by Central Govt. at an ever increasing rate. If it were not for the devotion and hard work shown by Miss Reeves it would be impossible for your Parish Council to carry out its duties and responsibilities with efficiency.

I should also like to thank the Deputy Chairman, Dr. Wright, for his constant support during the year. As he is your elected representative to the R.D.C. of Bittle he has been of the utmost help in many matters. My grateful thanks are also due to the other parish councillors and to the sub-committees they form for their ever ready help during the past year.

Would someone please propose and second this, my report, after which members from the floor may please speak.