

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I have pleasure in reporting to you details of the work of Sedlescombe Parish Council in the last year of its present term of office.

The year began with the resignation of Mr Hodges who had been a member of the Council since 1976. I would like to thank him for his work especially in connection with the Best Kept Village Competition. Mr A Bonney was co-opted to fill the vacancy. Other councillors will be retiring in May and my thanks go to them for the useful part they have played in the work of the Council.

Once again, Sedlescombe was awarded the Runners-up Certificate in the Championship Section of the Best Kept Village Competition. Although it was disappointing not to have won the main honours, Sedlescombe's record since 1979 has been excellent and I hope you will agree that the Competition serves a useful purpose in maintaining the standard of Village amenities. This year the Village is again automatically entered in the Championship and we hope for better luck. You will remember that Sedlescombe won the £125 Anti-Litter Prize in 1981. Some of the prize money has been used to employ another litter collector, this time in Brede Lane. A plaque was made by Mr Tunnicliffe of Hurst Lane and Mr Collier of RW French's, painted by the Bridge Garage and Mr Messetter and put up beside Sedlescombe's other two plaques on the Purthouse. The remainder of the prize money was given as prizes in a competition with an anti-litter theme run for the children of our primary school. Individual prizes were presented and a shield awarded to Yellow House for gaining the most points. The Council hopes in this way to encourage our children to be more litter conscious. Congratulations go to Sedlescombe School for winning the Best Kept Village Schools Project Competition in 1982 open to primary schools from all over Sussex.

Both the new school building and the conversion of the old school into attractive cottages have been admired by the Council so when the opportunity came for entries to be submitted to Rother for their 4-yearly Award for Outstanding Design, these were obvious choices. The result should be known by the Parish Assembly.

So much for competitions, but still on the subject of the School is the need for additional funds for the swimming pool. An unexpected extra expense has occurred for which the PTA has obtained a loan to be repaid hopefully within two years. The PTA approached the Council for help in February this year but unfortunately the Council's estimates had already been made the previous November. The Council will reconsider this later in the financial year when it should be clearer what funds will be required for the remainder of the year. The main unknown at this time is how much will be needed for the Council's intended purchase of the sportsfield. Negotiations with the owners, the Pestalozzi Village Trust, are at an early stage but the Council is hopeful that agreement can be reached and the necessary funds obtained. It is inevitable that the Council will have to sell its holdings of Treasury Stock but it is considered to be very important for the Village that the field is purchased. This would allow the Sports Association to carry out various projects such as improvements to the pavilion and the cricket table.

The Village Green is always carefully looked after by the Council. It is planned to spend £345 maintaining it next year. This will include maintenance of the extra piece of grass at the lower end of the Green which the County Council is responsible for but is unable to cut as often as we would like. The Council was, therefore, annoyed to hear that cars had been driven onto the Green. The main culprit was not a local person and the Council wrote to him telling him of his contravention of the Byelaws of the Green. The Byelaws were made in June 1962 but still remain enforceable although the fine has risen from 40 Shillings to £20.

The closure of the A229 between The Curlew and Cripps Corner has again been felt by local businesses. The Council has made representation to the County Council on this and although aware of the problems the County Council will not open the road until it is safe to do so. However, the County Council agreed to erect signs beside the Road Diversion ones suggesting that light vehicles could use the A229 to Cripps Corner and then travel via Bodian to The Curlew. This might help to restore some of the lost trade.

Another transport matter which could be important to Sedlescombe residents is the Hastings to Charing Cross Rail Line which it was thought might be closed. The Parish Council supported other councils and individuals in their opposition to the closure.

Transport is a part of nearly all our lives and Mrs Fulcher found it interesting to represent the Council at a Seminar on Transport run by the Department of Transport in London. She attended because of Sedlescombe's involvement in the Lift Scheme. This continues to provide a useful service although it has been less used of late. New leaflets were produced and circulated to residents at the time of the increase in fares in November 1982. The Council is grateful to Mrs Wheatley for her diligent attempts to get drivers and passengers "co-ordinated". Hastings journeys have again been difficult. If you can spare a seat in your car please let her know. The Lift Scheme was started to fill the gap caused by the reduction in the bus service. Buses have become quite an unusual sight in Sedlescombe and so when the bus shelter at the end of Hurst Lane was damaged again, very soon after it had been repaired, the Council considered whether it was worth spending more to have it repaired. A circular was sent to people living near the shelter but no replies received. The Council therefore decided to leave the shelter as it was for the time being, but then Mr K Taylor offered to keep it in good repair which the Council gratefully accepted.

Complaints have been received that cars are being parked right outside the Post Office and blocking the entrance. Inconsiderate parking on both sides of the road has also caused problems especially for Dennis Thomas's lorries and the approval of his entrance onto Garmens Way was the obvious answer. This was one of the many planning applications considered by the Council's Planning Committee. Amongst this year's was the approval of the Garden Centre at Blackbrooks and residential development of the Bakery Site.

Footpaths are the subject of consideration by another Committee. Mr H Leith was co-opted to serve on this Committee this year and he and the other members have led walks along many of Sedlescombe's rights of way. The Committee has also made representation to the County Council about footpath obstructions and has been successful in re-opening the paths. Waymarks in the form of small yellow arrows have been repainted by members and two of the six leaflets have been revised.

Home Defence, or Community Planning, has taken up the time of some councillors who have attended a five session course arranged by the County Council. Other residents have also attended and will continue to work on Sedlescombe's Home Defence Plan.

The Parish Council watches over the responsibilities of the other local authorities. The County Council had to be contacted on several occasions during the early Summer to bring forward the replacement of the footbridge on the footpath near the tennis courts. An excellent bridge was eventually erected with a totally unsuitable gate, parts of which had to be replaced several times. A substantial kissing gate is now in place. Many minor highway problems are continuously reported to the County Council.

The children's playgrounds are inspected regularly and any necessary repairs carried out. The rocking horse at the riverside playground is to have a major repair soon. The Council has set aside money to replace the Village noticeboard. The existing board often proves inadequate for Village notices and so a larger board is to be built in the Pestalozzi Village workshops.

I hope you have found this summary interesting and will raise any questions you have at the Assembly on 12 April in the Village Hall at 7.30 pm.

D WOODMAN
CHAIRMAN
SEDLSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
March 1983.