

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF SEDLESCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL. I have pleasure in presenting to you my report on the work of the Parish Council over the past year. Please bring your questions on it or on any other aspect of village life to the Parish Assembly.

1. RESIGNATION OF MR DAVID WOODMAN. At last year's Assembly, the Chairman, David Woodman, announced his retirement after twelve years on the Council. To mark his retirement and thank him for his service to the community, members presented him with a silver-plated tray at the Annual Meeting in May.

2. SEDLESCOMBE SPORTSFIELD. Loan repayments totally £1500 have been made this year and a similar sum is expected to be repaid next year.

Using the 1985 Best Kept Village prizemoney and proceeds from the sale of advertising in "What's What in Sedlescombe?", an engraved aluminium sign was obtained bearing the name for the field: "Sedlescombe Sportsfield - Oaklands Park".

The Council was fortunate in having the Bexhill Community Programme Team working at the field during the Spring/Summer. Their main tasks were to move quantities of soil and level the ground at the edge of the ditch so that the grass can be mown and to build a new fence and stile at the western end of the field. Labour costs were met by the Manpower Services Commission.

The Council joined the Sports Association in arranging a collection in the Village in memory of Mr Bill Hook who had worked so hard to raise funds for the Association. A memorial seat is now in place near to the pavilion and the Sports Association have planted conifers behind to shield it from cold winds.

British Gas approached the Council during the year seeking to purchase a small piece of land at the field on which to erect a gas governor. This would have improved gas supplies to Whatlington. The purchase price was agreed but the project has had to be postponed for technical reasons.

The Council has been involved in discussions with Hastings Bowmen on the erection of a storage hut at the field.

The Council plans in the coming year to double the size of the Sportsfield Car Park. Adequate parking should then be provided for most sporting events and the Council has asked that, where possible, cars are not parked on the field in the interests of safety and to protect the surface of the field.

3. BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION. A Village Spring Clean Day was held in April in preparation for the judging for the Championship Section of the Competition. Seventeen villagers, including the majority of parish councillors, helped to clear litter, move and dispose of heavy rubbish, paint waymarks, wash signs and remove brambles. Despite this and other effort, Sedlescombe did not reach the final round of judging. However, it was awarded second prize in the competition run concurrently with the Best Kept Village Competition by East Sussex County Council for its work to reduce litter in the Village. A cheque for £75 was presented to the Chairman of the Council on 6 November. A new litter bin has been provided with the money at the corner of Gammons Way and Brede Lane.

4. BREDE LANE DEVELOPMENT. The erection of three pairs of 3-bedroom semi-detached houses with garages and the construction of a public car park and conveniences is under way. Completion is expected by the early summer. It is hoped that the car park will considerably ease problems with car parking in Brede Lane, Gammons Way and around the Green.

Outline planning permission has been granted to Whitbread Fremlins for residential development of the land adjacent to the Queen's Head.

During the year, the Doctors' Surgery has been completed and occupied. The Council has agreed that its design is very much in keeping with the area and has supported its entry into Rother District Council's 4-yearly competition for outstanding design.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH. The Council has agreed to purchase three Neighbourhood Watch signs to be placed at the approaches to the Village.

6. RECREATION GROUNDS. Considerable work has been undertaken at the playgrounds including repair of both slides and the roundabout, replacement of the rocking horse top, painting items of playground equipment, repair and replacement of fences and renewal of the "No Dogs" sign. Further painting of equipment is planned.

7. HOME DEFENCE PLAN. Further progress has been made during the year. Members of the team have attended courses on Community Radiac Reporting, First Aid and Emergency Feeding. Discussions have been held with the County Council on law and order. Arrangements for some courses have been held up because of the indisposition of the course organiser at the County Council.

8. BUS SERVICES. The Council has considered alterations to bus timetables and has passed comments concerning these, and the linking of bus and train timetables, to the appropriate department. The bus shelter has been repaired during the year.

9. GRASS VERGES AT EAST VIEW TERRACE. The Council has been trying, so far without success, to persuade the District and/or the County Councils to remove at least one of the verges at East View Terrace so that cars can be safely parked on the road and emergency vehicles can drive through the estate easily. The District Council Housing Officer has said that he would be pleased to consider suggestions from car owners who wish to provide parking for themselves.

10. A21. Members of Sedlescombe and Westfield Parish Councils met officers of the Department of Transport and of the County Council in the Village Hall in June to discuss the Department's proposed alterations to the junctions of the A21/A229 and A21/Crazy Lane and to draw attention to the problems on the A21 between Sedlescombe and Ebdens Hill. It is the Department's policy to upgrade trunk roads, where possible, and some parts of the A21 are being improved, although, according to County Council statistics, insufficient traffic uses the A21 to warrant any major improvement of the road. The main purpose of the proposed alterations at the A21/A229 junction is to deter motorists from overtaking in the junction area, by narrowing the carriageways. A deceleration lane would be provided for vehicles turning into Blackbrooks Garden Centre. Although Sedlescombe Parish Council was not in favour of these, considering them to be a waste of money, a formal objection was not made. The proposed alteration at the A21/Crazy Lane junction would include bringing together several accesses to properties on the west side of the A21 into one safer access to the trunk road.

A considerable number of accidents have occurred in Kent Street during the year and the two councils' concerns were expressed. Following the meeting, resurfacing and improvements to signing in Kent Street were carried out and other improvements, particularly at junctions, are being contemplated.

11. PUBLICATIONS. The Council has produced revised copies of "What's What in Sedlescombe?" and "Walks around Sedlescombe". Both are available in Sedlescombe Post Office. The Council aims to provide new householders with a free copy of "What's What?". Mainly for the use of emergency services, the Council produced a list of Sedlescombe's houses in "walk order". The lists can also be purchased from the Council by individuals. The Newsletter has been produced three times during the year.

12. PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

12.1 PLANNING. Members and the Clerk attended a one-day training course on "Planning and the Parish Council" in June.

The Committee has met to consider each planning application in the parish. The largest developments proposed for Sedlescombe have been alterations to Great Sanders School and buildings to provide living accommodation and the construction of a workshop in the grounds and the development of the old Bakery site.

12.2 FINANCE. The Finance Committee has met quarterly and made recommendations to the Council on expenditure. Apart from minor maintenance work and administration expenses, the main expenditure planned for the coming year is the extension of the Sportsfield Car Park (£1500), repayments of the Sportsfield loan (£1500) and mowing (£1060). A repairs and renewals fund has been opened to save for major repairs.

12.3 HOME DEFENCE. The Committee has met on two occasions.

12.4 FOOTPATHS. The Committee has met on 3 occasions during the year. Sadly, the Committee lost a valuable co-opted member on the death of Mr Leith. Mr Matthew Hannan has now been co-opted. Members have continued to maintain our rights of way by reporting obstructions etc. to the County Council, painting waymarks, repairing stiles, leading footpath walks on Sunday afternoons etc. The Committee has also been concerned this year about crops growing on rights of way (technically obstructions), the spraying of crops causing a potential danger to walkers and their dogs and the lack of airstrip warning signs near the bridleway at Spilsted Farm.