

## SEDLSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL'S REPORT TO THE 1988 PARISH ASSEMBLY

Since my last report to you, the Parish Council has had a year of changing membership. Disappointingly, and surprisingly, there were insufficient candidates willing to stand for election to the Parish Council last May, although the shortfall was soon made up by co-option. Again, at the beginning of 1988, two more people were co-opted to fill the vacancies caused by the resignation of Mr Denny and Mr Messetter who had both been useful members of the Council for some years and had left the Parish. Thus, four out of the nine members have joined the Council during the year.

This year also seems to have been one of missed target dates. This was particularly noticeable at the two car parks in the Village; the completion date for the Brede Lane car park was regularly put back and the Community Programme have, as yet, been unable to start work on the extension of the Sportsfield Car Park. The plans to redevelop part of East View Terrace also made almost no visible progress during the year although the District Council seems to be moving again on this project and the Parish Council is involved with the plans for a new play area on the new estate. The repair of the gate and fence at the Sportsfield, which was damaged in a road traffic accident in June, was seriously delayed; firstly, because of problems with the car driver's insurance company and then by a backlog of work for the fencing firm. Other problems such as road repairs, clearance and repair of pavements and alterations at the southern end of the Village Green have been postponed by East Sussex County Council due to the enormous workload for them which emanated from the hurricane damage.

For the majority of us, the hurricane was probably the most significant single happening of the year and, like the other local authorities, the Parish Council is very involved in the replacement of the trees lost and damaged during the storm. Residents and a few Village organisations made generous donations to the Parish Tree Disaster Fund which will also receive £100 from the Sussex Men of the Trees. I would like to mention the generous donations by the Youth Club who were the first to offer money for tree planting and later sent a further donation raised by a Sponsored Swim. It is pleasing to see the Youth Club leaders encouraging the youngsters to help their Village. Another grant has been promised by Task Force Trees for tree replacement, stump clearance and tree surgery. Alder trees and birches are to be replanted at the riverside playground and limes, birches and willows at the Sportsfield. In November, a brief tree planting ceremony was held on the Village Green when a mountain ash tree was planted to replace the cherry uprooted by the hurricane.

The response to the Clerk's request for your written accounts of memories of the hurricane day was not overwhelming, but the accounts of those who did respond were very welcome. Sedlescombe School kindly provided stories and pictures by the children of the School and this was much appreciated.

The School was also involved in the design of the front cover of the 1988 edition of "What's What in Sedlescombe?". The Parish Council held a competition which was won by Elizabeth Rand aged 10 and her picture of the Post Office appears on the cover. Fifteen local businesses gave their valued support to the information sheet, showing something of the wide diversity of business activity in and around the Parish.

With the long-awaited opening of the car park has come, as expected, the problem of encouraging people to part their cars there. The parents of schoolchildren have mostly been co-operative and I think must find the new parking arrangements easier and safer. However, others, not all from Sedlescombe, continue to park in Brede Lane and this has caused the Parish Council to reconsider its position on double yellow lines. Please ensure that you use the car park whenever possible to keep our roads clearer and safer.

With the new development in Brede Lane has also come a renewed attempt to have the 30mph speed limit extended to East View Terrace. However, the relevant County Council Department has said it is unable at the present time to take on any more work and therefore cannot reconsider extension of this 30mph speed limit.

The subject of heavy traffic through the Parish of Sedlescombe was raised in the Autumn by residents of the Swailes Green area concerned about the speeding heavy traffic on the B2089 which causes damage to fences and properties and isolates the elderly in their homes. Swailes Green residents are to be congratulated on their week-long detailed survey of traffic movements on the B2089. At the same time, a petition was received by the Parish Council which protested about large lorries and juggernauts passing through the Village on the A229 causing noise, disturbance and

danger. The Parish Council sympathised and supported both complaints which were considered by the County Council Highways Committee. The Committee recommended that the County Engineer produces a report on the various matters raised by complainants. The result is awaited.

Dogs have been discussed by the Parish Council several times during the year. Firstly, on public rights of way, when a local farmer put up a notice in the Spring stating that "Dogs not on lead may be shot". This caused objections from villagers but the Parish Council, whilst being sorry that the notice had caused offence, felt that it was intended to warn walkers with dogs of the serious implications of allowing dogs off the leads on rights of way containing stock. Complaints have also been received from dog owners that stiles on local paths are not suitable for dogs. However, there is no obligation on a landowner to provide easy access for dogs. "They should be small enough to be carried over or large enough to jump over", say the County Council. In December, Rother's Health Officer spoke to the Council and members of the public about responsible dog ownership. Residents are reminded of the no-fouling byelaw for grass verges and footways in Sedlescombe. It is expected that other byelaws will be introduced and owners encouraged to collect faeces and dispose of it in bins.

The Parish Council has successfully pressed for street nameplates in the Parish. This request was initiated by Sedlescombe WI who, along with other WIs, are concerned about problems of emergency services finding addresses in the rural areas. To help further, owners are asked to clearly display their house name/number. Another request raised at an Open Forum for "dropped kerbs" at junctions in the Village for people with prams, shopping trolleys or wheelchairs has been granted and the alterations will be made in due course.

Although the Parish Council had not planned to give any grants to the Village Hall Management Committee this year, after ten years of loan repayments for alterations to the Hall, the need for urgent roof repairs became apparent and a grant of £200 was made to be followed by a further £200 in April. The Village Hall Management Committee have held several fund-raising events themselves and the Boot Sale which raised over £500 is one worthy of special mention.

The two planning applications which have created most interest in the Parish have been 1) plans to demolish Sedlescombe Service Station and to erect houses, either ten terraced or seven detached properties, and 2) plans to build to the rear of Pine View and Bramlea at Falcombe Green. This site was shown in Sedlescombe's Village Policy published in 1981 as suitable for development.

Concern about over-development in the whole of Rother District has caused most of the parishes to get together with Battle Town Council to oppose large-scale high-cost housing and resist pressure from surrounding towns. Most parishes have spoken of their need for limited housing suitable for local first-time buyers. A combined approach to the District Council, County Council, Department of the Environment and MPs is continuing.

Village appraisals have already become a familiar way of 'stock-taking' in Sussex parishes and this year, for the first time, Sedlescombe is to undertake an appraisal. This will be an opportunity to assess how life is today, how it has changed and to look forward to the future. One of our new councillors, Mr D Davis, has agreed to act as co-ordinator, and I expect you will be hearing from him soon. He also needs as many volunteers as possible to distribute and collect the appraisal forms, so please give him your support.

Sedlescombe is fortunate in having active Sports Clubs and a good sportsfield. It also has two tennis courts which, unfortunately, are not as well used by Sedlescombe residents as we would like. However, with the resurfacing of the courts, which has to be completed in two years time, comes an opportunity to provide a multi-purpose all-weather surface that would be ideal for sports such as 5-a-side football, volleyball, netball as well as tennis and other sports. The cost of their resurfacing would of course be greater than traditional tarmacadam but could provide many additional opportunities for use. If you have any comments on this proposal, or on anything else, please voice them at the Assembly on 19 April.

W BEANEY

Chairman, Sedlescombe Parish  
Council

March 1988