

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO 1992 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING

1. **VILLAGE HALL AND THE PLAYING FIELD SITE.** The quest for a site for a new village hall has caused a good deal of controversy in the Village with each site having its supporters and opponents. The land next to the tennis courts (ie "the playing field site") was the favoured site at the time of the public meeting in May 1990 but, before detailed enquiries into its suitability could commence, there was an objection to the Council's vehicular right of way. Legal advice has been obtained and proceedings through the County Court are in hand. It is the Parish Council's opinion that the vehicular access to this site must be safeguarded for future use of the land, whatever that may be.

At a later date, the Village Hall Committee will issue a paper and intends to hold a public meeting on the subject of the new hall.

2. **EAST VIEW TERRACE REDEVELOPMENT.** The first tenants moved into the new dwellings early last summer and, in June, I attended the Handing over of the Keys Ceremony to Mr John Wood. Unfortunately, the play area was not opened as planned in October because the equipment was not installed in accordance with British Standards, as had been specified by the Housing Association in its contract with the developer. In order to meet the Standards, some equipment had to be moved and additional safety surfacing installed. Because the surfacing could only be put down when a steady minimum temperature could be guaranteed, there has been further delay. The Parish Council will take over the playground for maintenance and insurance purposes as soon as the Housing Association can confirm in writing that the British Standards on safety surfacing, play equipment and spacing of equipment have been met.

The money left to the Village by Miss Heap, late of Park Shaw, will be used to pay for the seat at the playground.

3. **RIVERSIDE PLAYGROUND.** During the year, the rocking rockette was refurbished and installed at the Riverside Playground, two sets of swing chains replaced and all the play equipment repainted. Unfortunately, a certain amount of damage to the surrounding fence continues to be a problem.

4. **TRAFFIC SURVEY.** Last May, Mr Bill Farr organised a traffic survey. Thanks are due to him and to more than forty Sedlescombe residents who counted the vehicles during the two days. The aim of the survey was to seek backing for a request for the imposition of a weight restriction on the B2244 through Sedlescombe, ie no vehicles over 7.5 tonnes gross weight, apart from loading and unloading. However, with none of East Sussex's roads really suitable for heavy goods vehicles, the County Council would not make an exception to its policy of using all available A and B roads for all classes of traffic. As well as writing to the County Council and the Department of Transport, the Parish Council wrote to five supermarket chains asking them to arrange for their delivery drivers to use the A21 instead of the B2244. The Management of Tesco Stores was especially co-operative and a considerable reduction in the number of Tesco lorries travelling through the Village has been noted.

The installation of two signs "SEDLSCOMBE PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY THROUGH THE VILLAGE" is being considered, the cost possibly being aided by various village business concerns.

5. **VILLAGE GREEN.** The Parish Council has ensured that Eastbourne Water carefully re-instated the Green following the digging of a trench across it in connection with East View Terrace's water supply.

The byelaws of the Village Green date back to 1902 and are now out of date. The Parish Council is currently in correspondence with the Home Office about their revision.

Rother District Council has planted an English Oak Tree on the Green to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Queen's Accession.

6. **FOOTWAY AT CAR PARK.** A new short length of footway has been provided by the District Council on the corner of the car park as an extra safety measure for schoolchildren and parents. This followed requests from the Parish Council and School Governors.

7. **COMPETITIONS.** Last year, in addition to the Best Kept Village Competition, Sedlescombe was entered in two other competitions. Firstly, the South East in Bloom Competition where, despite the theft of hanging baskets from around the Village, Sedlescombe was placed fourth out of the nine entries in its category (Smarden was the winner). Thanks are due to all those who contributed by making an extra effort with their front gardens and those who opened their gardens to the public for the Sedlescombe in Bloom Open Gardens Afternoon which was held at the same time. All costs involved in entering this competition were met from the Afternoon and, in addition, a small donation was made to charity.

Sedlescombe was successful in being given the area award in the Best Kept Village Green Competition, which was held for the first time in 1991, sponsored by Atco. Mr Johnson, Mrs Berry and Miss Hervey are to be thanked for their contributions of photograph, verse and comments which were submitted with the entry. Mr Burgess, as always, did an excellent job keeping the Green tidy and Mr Shelley was the mowing contractor. A prize-giving ceremony was held on the Green in the Autumn when a plaque and splendid mower were presented to the Council. This event was covered in "Sussex Life". The mower has been sold.

8. **CHURCHYARD.** The Parish Council has been informed that there are very few grave-spaces left in Sedlescombe Churchyard and the PCC is endeavouring to purchase adjacent land so that it can be extended. The Council has agreed to help towards the legal expenses connected with the purchase, believing that most residents would wish for any new Churchyard to be as close to the existing one as possible.

9. **SPORTSFIELD.** The Sports Association continues to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the field. However several matters have been dealt with by the Council during the year. These include approval of one Sports Association boot sale on the field, which is to be held on 23 May; refusal of a request for permission to use a metal detector on the field; obtaining advice on stopping the driving of golf balls on the field; and application to the Home Office for a "Dogs on Leads" Byelaw, following their refusal of a dog ban. The introduction of this byelaw has taken considerably longer than the Parish Council would have wished and, in the meantime, those walking their dogs are asked to ensure that fouling does not occur on the playing area.

10. **PESTALOZZI CRAFT WORKSHOPS.** Applications by the Pestalozzi Village Trust for planning permission to erect several craft workshops not far from "The Stables" at Oaklands were opposed by many at Oaklands and in the Village. After various amendments, one workshop only has been built and the plans for the others withdrawn.

11. **NEW ENGLAND LANE JUNCTION WITH A21.** The restricted visibility on driving from this Lane has been drawn to the County Council's attention. Although insufficient funds are likely to be available in the near future for any major improvement, other alterations are being considered.

12. SCOUT HUT. The Parish Council has purchased a table for the Scout Committee's use at the hut.

13. ROTHER LOCAL PLAN. The first stage in the production of a Rother Local Plan took place in 1991 with local people being invited to put forward details of the problems and issues which ought to be tackled by the Plan. Although no interest was shown by local residents, the Parish Council gave the matter careful consideration and submitted a report to the District Council. More will be heard about the Local Plan later this year and it will be important for residents to check that their wishes are taken into account regarding the way Sedlescombe and the rest of the Rother District should develop during the next ten years.

14. TEMPORARY USES OF LAND. Recently, temporary uses of land in the parish for various purposes such as boot sales, clay pigeon shooting, dirt track racing and war games have been drawn to the Parish Council's attention. All these activities are allowed without planning permission for a limited number of days (14 or 28) in any calendar year, but they do unfortunately sometimes cause disturbance to those living nearby.

15. BLACKMAN, PAVIE & LADDEN, MARLEY LANE. An application by Blackman, Pavie & Ladden to use the charcoal burning site in Marley Lane as an industrial/commercial business park was called in for decision by the Secretary of State for the Environment. A public inquiry was held in January 1992.

16. LOWER MARLEY FARM. Rother's refusal of an application for permission to open 7 acres of land at Lower Marley to the public and other plans for a tea shop and produce/craft shop has resulted appeals by the owners to the Secretary of State for the Environment. Following a public inquiry in February, the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State has dismissed the appeals. No permission will be needed for a maximum of 14 car boot sales on the site in any one year (permitted development rights).

17. VILLAGE SHOP. The Parish Council made representations to Rother District Council on behalf of Mr Dubery of the Clockhouse Stores which were successful in that a reduction in the business rate for the shop was obtained. We are fortunate in being served so adequately by two local shops. It is in all our interests to use them as much as possible. You are reminded that, amongst other things, it is possible to pay your community charge at our local Post Office.

18. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCES. In the 1992/3 financial year, every chargepayer in Sedlescombe will pay £5.34 into the Collection Fund for Sedlescombe services and Sedlescombe Parish Council will receive £13000 from the Community Charge to spend in accordance with the estimates which were drawn up by the Parish Council last autumn.

Sue M. Betts

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MARCH 1992