

# **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE 1998 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING OF SEDLESCOMBE**

## **POLICING**

I am pleased to start by reporting that the good relationship between the Village and our community police officer, Mick Kempster, has continued and Neighbourhood Watch has played an important part in fighting crime. Following a suggestion by the Police, your Council now considers whether plans submitted with Sedlescombe planning applications can sensibly be amended in order to limit opportunities for crime.

## **SPILSTEAD AIRSTRIP**

This August, the three-year temporary planning permission for the use of the airstrip at Spilstead Farm expires and a new application is expected from the operator. Throughout the three years of the last temporary approval, your Council has been represented at each meeting of the Monitoring Group which has met to discuss breaches of the planning conditions and protocol. The main burden of monitoring movements has fallen on Peter Palmer and Leslie Bennett of Whatlington and your Council is very appreciative of their contribution towards controlling use of the airstrip. Recent consideration of the current position by your Council has resulted in it being unanimously agreed that the operation of an airfield in this parish is of no benefit to the community whatsoever and that the Council would still like to see cessation of flying activities at Spilstead airstrip altogether. Whatlington Parish Council has come to a similar conclusion. Whatever the outcome of the forthcoming application, your Council will work to minimise the impact the airstrip has now and will have in the future on those living in this parish.

## **TRAFFIC CALMING**

Attempts are still being made to have the speed restriction starting along the Hawkhurst Road. To improve safety, new larger, yellow-backed signs have been put up by the County Council in Church Hill and Sandrock Hill. The position of the new bend sign outside the Parish Church has not pleased everyone and we have asked for it to be moved further south in Church Hill.

## **A21 CORRIDOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

It is still planned in the revised County Structure Plan to allocate land within this parish in Marley Lane as a large industrial site. An Examination in Public is to be held 28 April to 15 May at the White Hart Hotel, High Street, Lewes. The subject of Employment is scheduled to be heard 7 May (afternoon), 8 May (morning), 12 May (all day). Although your Council has not been invited to appear, it is expected that the Sussex Association of Local Councils will represent its views in their presentation.

## **PUBLIC PLAYING FIELD AND TENNIS COURTS**

The fences around the play area have been vandalised again this year. The fences surrounding the tennis courts have also been occasionally damaged by persons climbing over. Please be vigilant and give PC Kempster a ring (772356, local file page 105) if you are suspicious that anything untoward is going on. There has been some parking on the grass beside the courts again and your Council intends to put up a line of small posts to remind people that, in order to safeguard users, parking is not allowed.

The tennis courts continue to be well used by the general public and by the Club on Sunday afternoons. Many thanks to Eric at the Bridge Garage for collecting the hiring fees from the public and giving out the key. Whilst general maintenance is ably undertaken by the Club, the Parish Council is responsible for resurfacing and is putting money collected from the public/coaching and from the Club into a Fund which will pay for the resurfacing when it is required.

## **SPORTSFIELD**

The sports pitches are all well used and the Sports Association always ensures that the field is kept in a very good condition. Your Council is responsible for the ditches, fences and trees. The Association worked hard last year to repair the pavilion in the hope that it will last until the new village hall/pavilion has been built.

## **MAINTENANCE WORK**

Various jobs crop up from time to time in the parish and we are very fortunate in having people to call upon to do them. The Council is very grateful to John Cook for his excellent work throughout the year. Thanks are also due to those councillors who willingly help with physical chores that need doing urgently.

## **DOG FOULING**

The problems caused by those who will insist on allowing their dogs to foul our paths, car parks, the Sportsfield and play areas have been drawn to our attention increasingly this year. A second dog waste bin has been put up

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in the Brede Lane car park for the convenience of dog owners. Weekly emptying has been arranged, the cost being levied on the Council Taxpayers for Sedlescombe. If you are a dog owner, please be considerate of those who will come after you walking, playing, mowing etc

### **EAST VIEW TERRACE KICKABOUT AREA**

We are pleased that this area is still being well used by youngsters. After a bit of a hiccup, the Residents' Association has been reformed and is raising money for future maintenance of the area.

### **NEW DEVELOPMENT AT BALCOMBE GREEN**

Despite neither the District nor Parish Councils supporting construction of an increased number of properties in Balcombe Green, the Planning Inspector found in favour of the application to build 15 dwellings. Your Council had objected because of the possible unacceptable impact on the amenities of nearby existing properties in Gorselands and Park Shaw.

### **CIDER-MAKING AND BREWERY IN NEW ENGLAND LANE**

We were very concerned to hear of plans to change the use of farm buildings in New England Lane to cider-making and brewing. We consider this site to be unsuitable for industrial use mainly because it would result in large lorries using a narrow rural lane and probably other lanes in the vicinity. So far, no decision has been made by the District Council on this application.

### **CHANGE OF STREET NAME**

A survey of residents resulted in the Council making an application for the name Beech Farm Road to be changed officially to Hawkhurst Road. This has been done and street name-plates erected. The long-standing request for a footway from Hawkhurst Road to meet the one in Sandrock Hill is still on the County Council's list although not very near the top. As a result of our request, the "Please drive carefully through the village" sign has been resited further north in Hawkhurst Road to coincide with end of the Sedlescombe postal addresses.

### **GRITTING ROUTES**

County Councillor Mrs Field is supporting your Council in trying to get Brede Lane added to the primary gritting routes by amending County Council policy to allow local engineers to prioritise needs locally.

### **FOOTPATHS**

Your Council has carried out a survey of all public rights of way in the parish and has submitted a schedule of work which needs to be undertaken to bring our paths into good order. We have been most fortunate in having some work already completed by members of Hastings Ramblers on behalf of the County Council.

### **VILLAGE HALL**

So much has happened in the last year that I have asked Mr Cornford to give a written report. He will also be able to give up-to-date information at the Assembly.

### **THANKS**

It is appropriate at this time to thank my fellow Councillors and the Clerk for the time and hard work they have put in again. The number of papers, reports and questionnaires which Parish Councils are asked to digest seems to increase each year.

I hope you will be able to attend the Assembly on 28 April. This is your opportunity to question all three local authorities, as your representative of both Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council as well as myself should be able to answer questions on the work of their own authority. This is the last year of the 4-year term of office for District and Parish Councillors - elections are due to be held in May 1999 - have you thought of standing for election?

Sheila Betts, March 1998