

AIM NO.1: TO ACHIEVE AN INFORMED AND PARTICIPATING SEDLESCOMBE COMMUNITY



The Council believes that participation by residents is important and is very grateful for the help and assistance given by so many in a variety of ways. Some people who do help were able to attend the Quality Parish Council presentation in the Village Hall in October. Lord Lytton, Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils, presented the certificate to the Chairman of the Parish Council.

During the past year, the Parish Council has tried to keep residents fully informed about its deliberations and decisions. The Bulletin has been delivered quarterly to each house in the parish by a dedicated group of local people and the 2005 Directory was included in the January delivery.



Organisations and businesses have again participated in the Annual Assembly by staging attractive table displays. This is particularly helpful for newcomers to the Village who have the opportunity of finding out about what goes on.

Newcomers that we know about are also given a Welcome Pack on their arrival. This year, the pack includes new Village Shop and Chapel Hill Church leaflets.

Agendas, Minutes, News and Events are amongst the information that can be obtained on the Sedlescombe community website that the Council updates. Agendas can also be seen on the noticeboard and at the Village Library in Committee Room 2 of the Hall on Tuesday afternoons.

The glass in the noticeboards outside the Post Office has this past year been replaced with safety glass.

A national initiative to encourage youngsters to get to know about local authorities and their work has been followed by Rother District Council with local secondary schools. In a similar way, the Parish Council has been working with the top class of the Village School to show what it means to be a parish councillor. The formation of a School Parish Council has been a great success with lots of ideas being put forward by the children.

This year, for the second time, the Council will be making "Good Citizen's Awards" at the Assembly. We are grateful for sponsorship from Fleetmark Ltd.

AIM NO.2: TO ACHIEVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY SEDLESCOMBE COMMUNITY

Sedlescombe's safety has been greatly enhanced since last August when Sedlescombe's own Police Community Support Officer started working here. Sedlescombe is the first parish in the county to have signed a two-year agreement with the Sussex Police Authority for this purpose. Regular Crime & Safety Committee meetings have been held to monitor the effectiveness of the PCSO and to consider new problems. By the time the agreement ends on 31/03/2006, the Committee will have considered whether the agreement should be extended and whether it can be afforded. In order to find out whether the fear of crime has diminished in Sedlescombe, a fear of crime survey is being planned for next September. The Council is grateful that SLM Motors has been willing to be involved with provision of a car for the PCSO.

The Sedlescombe Neighbourhood Watch Group is now separate from the Parish Council and has taken over the work of home security visits, installation of locks and memo-minders and promotion of Lifeline etc. and, now, working with the Fire & Rescue Service, is also offering installation of smoke alarms.

For the first time, the Parish Council sponsored electric blanket testing in Sedlescombe Village Hall for one morning in October. About fifty blankets were tested and many, unfortunately, were condemned. Two of the blankets were over forty years old.

Encouraged by the Council, the School has been working on its Travel Plan. One initiative is the morning Walking Bus which has started thanks to the co-operation of the Village Hall Trustees who have allowed parents to drop children off in the Village Hall car park. The Parish Council has also contributed by supplying the materials and arranging for Hastings Community Punishment Team to build a path through Red Barn Field which can be used by the children. Other Walking Buses in the Village might follow. You are reminded that it is especially important, with the children using footpaths on their way to School, that dog owners do not allow their pets to foul the paths.

Parish Emergency Plan. A group made up of parish councillors and other residents has been working on the production of a Sedlescombe Emergency Plan. This is a plan that will be put into use should an emergency arise in the Village when the District Council and Police will take the lead assisted by the local volunteers.

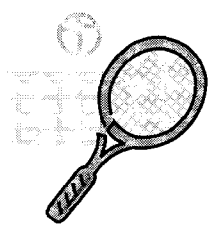
Road Safety is a continuing concern in the Village. Speed indicator devices have been brought into use throughout the county and have been positioned in the Village on several occasions. The Council, with the help of the County Council, would like to find some way of improving the safety of pedestrians walking from Brede Lane to the village shop.

AIM NO.3: TO HELP PROVIDE AMENITIES AND SERVICES IN SEDLESCOMBE

The past year has at last seen the extension of the sportsfield car park. There is, therefore, no excuse for any parking in the Pestalozzi road. The Sports Association and the Parish Council have come to agreement on a new 30-year lease of the sportsfield whereby the Sports Association will be entirely responsible for maintenance of the field. The Association is still working on plans for a new pavilion and have started fund-raising for the project.

Access to the Pumphouse on the Village Green for disabled scooters and the less agile pedestrian should soon be improved by the lowering of the kerb on the shop side.

The Tennis Club has been able to provide free tennis coaching for children for several months thanks to an "Awards for All" grant and the Parish Council granting free use of the courts. This has worked very well allowing between thirty and forty children to have coaching.



After fifty years associated with the tennis courts in Sedlescombe, the Sedlescombe Tennis Club has decided that it is time to move to the courts at Sedlescombe Golf Course where there are facilities available such as restaurant and bar. Whilst understanding the reasons for the move, the Council is very sorry to lose its association with the Club. For the time being, the courts will remain available to the public. The cost of hire is £5/court/hour and the key can be obtained from the shop counter of Sedlescombe Post Office during opening hours.



Thanks to a group of local people, the Tuesday-afternoon Village library sessions have been able to continue in the Hall. This is a real asset to the Village to add to the fortnightly visits of the mobile library.

This year, the Sedlescombe Footpaths Working Group, made up of parish councillors and local residents, has been surveying our footpaths and bridleways and has begun some maintenance and installation of gates. Although progress is not always as fast as we would like, mainly because of funding and manpower restrictions at the County Council, this work is appreciated. Members of this group also took part in a first aid training day in the village hall to which they were able to invite other villagers, including two girls working at the Pestalozzi International Village.

Another group of people are currently working on plans to refurbish the Riverside Playground following the Parish Council's initial groundwork. By using this voluntary group, it is hoped that it will be possible to obtain considerable grant aid through the Landfill Tax

Credit Scheme which is not available to parish councils.

The Parish Council was very optimistic that the East View under-10s playground could be refurbished as well this coming year, especially when Orbit Housing Association approved the proposed plan and offered a substantial grant. However, a week later, the Parish Council was informed that a mistake had been made and there was no money available. On receiving this information, the Parish Council decided that it should give Orbit Housing Association the required three months' notice that it would no longer be maintaining this playground. The situation is further complicated by a change of staff at Orbit Housing Association and to date we do not know what the future holds for this playground.

Users of the village hall will greatly benefit from the tarmac surface which has been installed at the car park there. The cost of the work has been split between the Village Hall Committee, Rother District Council and the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has continued with its programme of asking the District Council to replace or provide street name signs throughout the Village. The positioning of these signs is not always straightforward but we hope that they will serve a useful purpose.

After several years of undertaking the mowing of Sedlescombe's grass verges, the Parish Council has decided to hand the work back to the County Council which is the responsible body. This is mainly to do with insurance issues and increased prices. This will, it is expected, mean a drop in the number of cuts of our verges. If you have any queries about verge grass cutting, please contact 01424 220022, East Sussex Highways Department at Sidley.

The District Council's suggestion that the maintenance of public conveniences should be handed over to parish councils was greeted with dismay when first announced last year. This resulted in Rother deciding not to make any changes for the time being. However, they will be reviewing the situation again in the next couple of years. It might be that, if Sedlescombe is no longer having to contribute to the public conveniences in other Rother towns and villages, Sedlescombe Council Taxpayers could benefit from changes to the maintenance arrangements. The Parish Council will consider the matter carefully when more is known.

AIM NO.4: TO SUPPORT APPROPRIATE LOCAL BUSINESS AND SUITABLE RURAL EMPLOYMENT IN SEDLESCOMBE

The Council hopes the 2005 Directory, which has an additional four pages, will encourage support by residents of the listed businesses. Whilst village organisations can advertise free of charge, the financial contribution from businesses is used to cover the cost of printing at no cost to the Council Taxpayer.

Every business that paid for advertising in the Directory was also given free advertising in the Business page of the Sedlescombe community website – www.sedlescombe.org.

The Council is pleased to report the success of the Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard who received two awards at the Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum Festival in 2004. This business was also awarded a Bronze Medal for the Sedlescombe 2002 vintage Dry White and a "Highly Commended" certificate gained for its Regent Dry Red at the English Wine of the Year awards.

In 2004, the Chairman and Clerk attended the presentation by the Duke of York to Swift-Lite Charcoal Ltd. of the Queen's Award for Enterprise for the Company's achievements in overseas trade. It was, therefore, all the more sad to hear of the devastating fire at the premises in Marley Lane in February. Swift-Lite Charcoal was not only one of the parish's largest employers but charcoal was Sedlescombe's most enduring industrial enterprise.

The "Buy with Confidence", "Contractor Call" and "Check the Trader" trading standards schemes were launched in 2004 by East Sussex County Council and promoted by the Parish Council in the Sedlescombe Directory.

As usual, businesses have been invited to provide a display table at the Annual Assembly in the Village Hall.

AIM NO.5: TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE SEDLESCOMBE'S BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

In 2004, a Conservation Area in the historic core of Sedlescombe was designated by Rother District Council after detailed discussions with the Parish Council.



Members and the Clerk attended courses regarding the new Planning and Compensation Act.

The Parish Council continued to comment on planning applications using the policies in the Draft Local Plan.

After continued opposition, including from Sedlescombe Parish Council, to the proposed waste handling facility at Mountfield, the site has been finally dropped from the Waste Local Plan. Thanks are due not only to the Mountfield Heritage Group but also to County Councillor Kathryn Field for her continued work including appearance at the Inquiry.



The "Living Churchyard" volunteer work in removing rhododendrons and planting daffodils, yellow rattle etc. has continued. A wild life information board has been installed. The success has been highlighted as Sedlescombe is now used as an

example in the Living Churchyard project.

The continued work of nearly thirty litter wardens in keeping our streets tidy is much appreciated. The enormous amount of rubbish that is deposited on our grass verges is amazing.

To help with litter control, the Council invested in a large litter bin for the Riverside and negotiated with Rother regarding its emptying. Unfortunately, because the design has not been as successful as hoped with the rain pouring in the top, the Council is still in discussions with the supplier.

A visual survey of the grass verges at Gorselands revealed an large number of wildflower species including the Autumn Lady's Tresses Orchid.

Please note that this report has been categorised under the aims of the Sedlescombe Parish Plan 2002