

ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Dear Parishioner,

The purpose of this newsletter is to give you an overview of what your Parish Council has been doing for the past year, and its objectives for the year ahead. We hope you find it useful and informative.

The Parish Council is allocated a small proportion of the Council Tax money collected, and this year, 2010/2011, our precept has been set at £51,000, with a budgeted expenditure of £65,710 taking into account monies as yet unspent from last year. It is intended that the balance of the expenditure will be taken from the Council's reserve if necessary. This Precept represents an increase of 3.03% on the 2009/2010 figure, and compares favourably with a national inflation rate of 3.5% (January 2010). For someone living in a Band D property, this equates to £33.11 per annum, an increase of just 2.67%. You will find a more detailed breakdown of the Parish Council accounts later in this newsletter.

This past year has seen the completion of the car park by the Cemetery on the Eridge Road, allowing visitors a safe place to park. The other major project for the Council has been the new pre-school building, and with the Council's paperwork now completed East Sussex County Council's contractors have now started work. This will be a major asset to our Parish, providing a safe and modern environment for our youngest Parishioners in which to learn and develop. Completion is anticipated for November.

It would appear that the major concern for most of the Parishioners is the issue of speeding through our villages, and one, which is shared by the Council. We are actively trying to address this on-going problem, despite the numerous 'legal' hurdles that we are confronted with. A more detailed report on our progress and plans can be found later in this newsletter under 'Highways and Lighting'.

The months of December and January brought with them some of the worst snow seen for 30 years; whilst great fun for the children of the Parish, it caused major disruption for many of us trying to work. East Sussex County Council experienced a tough battle trying to keep the main roads open, which meant minor roads were not gritted, and many became impassable unless you had a 4x4 vehicle. The aftermath of all this snow was the numerous potholes that appeared, causing more headaches for ESCC; for no sooner had they repaired the holes, the prolonged heavy rain that followed the snow washed them away. This bout of bad weather also emphasised the importance of our local shops, which have suffered since the opening of Tesco in Jarvis Brook. What would we have done if they had not been there in the recent bad weather? They provide an essential service, and support local traders/farmers by stocking their products, so please, use them or lose them!

Please find below a list of all your Councillors, and remember, we are here to serve you.

Les Pike
Chair of Rotherfield Parish Council

CHAIRMAN		
Cllr Les Pike	852252	R
VICE CHAIRMAN		
Cllr Peggy Halse Adamson	853990	R
Cllr John Bowerman	852955	R
Cllr David Clark	852126	R
Cllr Robert Harris	853426	R
Cllr Roger Jaques	852087	R
Cllr John Padfield	852897	E
Cllr Norman Wickenden	852229	R
Cllr Chris Prince	853889	R
Cllr David Harman	852800	R
Cllr Colin Clibbens	852062	E
Cllr Rachel Williams	853529	R
Cllr Nicola Bolton	853269	R
R = Rotherfield Ward		
E = Eridge Ward		

ANNUAL REPORT

General

The Parish Council is made up of thirteen members, covering Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge and Boars Head. In the past twelve months we have seen the departure of Michael White and Natalie Bowers, but are delighted to welcome Rachel Williams and Nicola Bolton. Michael White has served on the Council for almost 24 years, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his dedicated service during that time. The next Parish Council election is due in May next year, so if you are keen to help, influence and serve the community in which you live, we would encourage you to give serious consideration in putting yourself forward.

I am sure you will agree that it has been a welcome sight seeing our local PCSOs walking the streets of our Parish. We have had several PCSOs in the past year, and they have all been proactive regarding parking issues, speed watches and general street meetings in which residents have had the opportunity to express their concerns and opinions. I know our current PCSO, Matt Boyle, is keen to keep a visible presence in our Parish, and he is very approachable! Thankfully, we are fortunate to live in an area with a low crime rate; let's hope it stays that way.

In the past few weeks we have seen the introduction of the new Crown Caddy refuse collection scheme. Initial figures from Wealden report that 80% of households are now making use of these new recycling caddies. A representative from Wealden attended our Annual Parish Meeting in May to help explain the benefits of the scheme, which gave you opportunity to ask any questions relating to the subject.

Finally, the Parish Council simply would not function without the incredible hard work of our Clerk, Trevor Thorpe. He ensures we have all the relevant paper work on time for each meeting, takes all the minutes at every meeting and reminds us to be at the correct venue at the correct

time! On behalf of all the Councillors, I would like to extend a big thank you.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

The precept for 2010/11, (the amount of money the Parish Council has allocated to spend), has been set at £51,000, an increase of just 3.03% on the previous year. For a Band D property, this equates to £33.11 per annum.

Rotherfield Parish Council Summary of Draft Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2010	
<u>Receipts</u>	
Precept	£49,500
Burial Fees	£5,689
Grants Received	£428
Interest	£140
Other Income	£5,112
Total Receipts	£60,869
<u>Payments</u>	
Administration	£20,316
Grants/Donations	£2,206
Recreation	
Grounds	£8,264
Burial Grounds	£13,405
Street Lighting	£12,303
Roads and	
Footpaths	£4,712
Other Expenditure	£6,463
Total Payments	£67,669

Recreation & Burial Committee

The Council pays contractors to cut the grass and hedges of the Recreation Ground, St Denys' Old Burial Ground, and the Parish Cemetery in Eridge Lane. They also arrange for the cutting of the "Amenity Land" by the Doctors Surgery and certain other areas of grass in the Parish. A program of tree and hedge clearance is currently taking place in the St Denys' Old Burial Ground. The area to the left of the main pathway has been tidied, and the section to the right of the

ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Working for the Community

in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

path will be attended to after the nesting season. It is also intended to arrange for the levelling of various sunken graves. After several years of delay in formalising the lease on the area of land adjoining the Parish Cemetery, a small parking area has been created for the safety and convenience of those visiting. A new fence and gate have been installed and a hedge is shortly to be planted on the boundary between the parking area and Cemetery. A water supply has been installed, and thanks are due to the adjoining landowner for extending his supply to enable this to happen. It is anticipated the water will be available April to October. A design has also been drawn up for a walled and paved Remembrance area in the corner of the Parish Cemetery, currently occupied by the derelict shed. A tender has been accepted for this. Through the efforts of some of the Councillors, the roundabout in the children's play area of the recreation ground has had its bearings replaced and is now functioning correctly (i.e. it now spins much quicker, much to the Councillors enjoyment!). The playground equipment, apart from the slide, will be repainted shortly.

Highways & Lighting Committee, (Incorporating Footpaths Committee)

Speeding continues to be the main issue within our Parish, and affects many of our roads. In an ideal world we would try and address all these at the same time, but unfortunately funds simply do not allow us to do so. We have, therefore, been concentrating on Mayfield Road, where several speed checks have been carried out, with results showing average speeds in the mid 40s in a 30mph area. East Sussex County Council acknowledge this to be a problem, but because there have been no fatal accidents, it is not considered to be a priority. We are not allowed to erect any more 30mph signs because our street lamps are no more than 183 metres (200yards) apart on this section. A Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) has been ruled

out, as they are only effective in reducing the average speed by approximately 10%. We also looked at the possibility of building chicanes, (similar to those in Maresfield and Lamberhurst), but these would have cost in the region of £45,000, which we, the Parish Council, would have had to fund. With our precept for the next year set at £51,000, this was also a non-starter. We are now looking at the possibility of removing one of the street lamps in Mayfield Road, and reinstalling it just in St Peters Mead. This would allow us to have 30mph repeater signs, and the repositioned lamp would still emit light on to Mayfield Road.

Recent speed checks by our PCSO in Station Road also highlighted a speeding problem. However, the disturbing fact is that of those caught speeding, 25% were local residents!

A VAS has been allocated to Mark Cross, with its positioning yet to be finalised at the time of writing this newsletter.

We have recently received a 'Deer Aware' press release from East Sussex County Council encouraging drivers to take extra care this spring, when more deer tend to be out looking for food. This, together with the explosion in the deer population, greatly increases the possibility of an accident. Remember to: slow down near deer warning signs, be prepared to stop as more deer are likely to follow the first one you see. Do not approach an injured deer; it could be dangerous. Call Sussex Police on 0845 60 760 999.

Planning and Building Committee

The Parish Council's Planning and Building Committee meet at 21 day intervals, this to tie in with the usual planning consultation period. During 2009 they met on 17 occasions and received 102 sets of planning application documents from Wealden District Council for their consideration and comments. The Chair and Vice Chair of the

Committee endeavour to view the properties and sites in question prior to the meetings. These are usually held in the Parish Council meeting room at the Village Hall and the public are welcome to attend. At the Chairman's discretion, the public may make brief statements to the meeting in respect of applications on the agenda. Recommendations made by the Committee are noted by Wealden, but the ultimate planning decision, (subject to any appeals), rests with them. Of the 102 applications considered, it is noted that 96 were eventually approved by Wealden, with 6 being refused.

Who does what?

- Rotherfield Parish Council represents nearly 2600 electors at local level, and has powers and duties set by law. It has a small proportion of everybody's Council Tax to spend, and in 2010/11 the precept is £51,000.
- District services such as refuse collection, housing and planning are the responsibility of Wealden District Council.
- Transport, highways, education and other major services, (including Police and Fire Services), are provided by East Sussex County Council.

However, the Parish Council is consulted on issues arising in all these areas, (and in others such as Health, the Countryside Agencies, etc), and can lobby for action where it does not have its own powers.

FOUND A PROBLEM?

Help yourself and the community by using these numbers when the need arises:

0345 60 80 193 for reporting lights out and road & footpath repairs.

0845 60 70 999 for reporting vandalism and crime

01892 602552 for reporting abandoned vehicles

01892 602723 for reporting fly-tipping

Alternatively, you can report all the above on:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/fault

SMITH AND FERMOR CHARITY

This local charity benefits from trusts created many years ago for the benefit of the poor and needy. The Charity still receives reasonable sums each year, but the number of cases that come to us for consideration has dwindled. Grants are available for those in need, of any age, and who are unable to get help from any other source. The main qualification is that the recipient should live in the areas of Rotherfield Parish or Crowborough Town.

The trustees consider all applications sympathetically within the terms of the trust, and grants have, for example, been made to fund equipment for a severely handicapped person, for pupils with learning difficulties at a local school and a cooker for a pensioner.

If you wish to apply, or you come across cases that you believe we may be able to help, please contact the Secretary on 01892 664245. You may be assured that complete confidentiality will be preserved.

CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Trevor Thorpe
82 Fermor Way
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 3BJ

*Email: rotherfieldpc@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01892 664245*

*For further information, please see our notice boards, or visit our web site:
www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk*

Here you will find a wealth of information, plus agendas for forthcoming meetings, minutes of previous meetings, links to other local government websites, useful contact numbers, details of current issues and lots more.