



NEWSLETTER

Volume 6 Issue 3

December 2011

Dates for your diary 2012

Planning Committee Youth Centre	5th January
Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	16th January
Planning Committee Youth Centre	5th February
Planning Committee Youth Centre	1st March
Parish Council Meeting Robertsbridge Hall	19th March
Planning Committee Youth Centre	5th April

Note: Meetings of the full Council now take place on the 3rd Monday of alternate months. Planning Committee meetings are held monthly if applications are submitted.

All meetings start at 7.30 pm and a period of up to 15 minutes is allowed at the start of the meeting for public comment or questions if required.

Agendas for meetings are posted on the parish notice boards and web site at least 3 days before the meeting - planning applications are available for inspection at the parish office during normal opening times or on the Rother District Council web site - www.rother.gov.uk and you can comment on planning applications on-line



We wish all residents a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year

Car Park Update - Rother District Council (RDC) owns the car park in Station Road. For twenty years the 2 & 9 hour bay limits were not enforced, and the car park was well-used with few problems. A year ago RDC began, without warning, to enforce the limits. At first they issued numerous £80 fines, but within a few weeks most users had moved to park on the streets, adding substantially to the already congested conditions in the village and, in particular, reducing George Hill to one-way working.. The 2-hour bays in the car park are now only 25 % occupied during the working day. For several reasons (incorrect signage, lack of an appeals process) the fines may be invalid. RDC has a legal duty to prevent traffic congestion: all they have done is to increase it.



In April 2011, RDC Scrutiny Committee (one of whose functions is to review RDC actions that are having unintended consequences) accepted a petition signed by 325 people, but were uninterested in the facts and refused a moratorium – a temporary suspension – of enforcement of the car park time limits until the Rother-wide parking review is complete and new arrangements in force.

In September the same committee, different chairman, again considered the matter, this time with some facts, and agreed to recommend a moratorium to the RDC Cabinet who make the final decision.

In October, the full Cabinet of 8 councillors voted unanimously to refuse a moratorium. They met in private before the public meeting. We do not know what went on behind closed doors, but below are the ostensible reasons for refusal that were stated in public by various members of the Cabinet. (*Comments in brackets are mine.* - Dicky Clymo)

- (1) **RDC must raise all the money it can from its car parks.** (*We understand this. The income from February to September, which we were told is "significant", was £120. The annual cost of an employee and his transport is probably about £15,000, but RDC are unable to say what proportion of this is used for enforcement at Robertsbridge. £120 is less than 1 % of that total. At this rate it would take about 25,000 years to pay for the recent Bexhill sea front works.*)
- (2) **Congestion on Robertsbridge streets is the fault of commuters, the railway, ESCC, and the Police. Not RDC. We should seek improvements from these other bodies.**
- (3) **The Parish Council should allow parking at the Village Hall gravelled car park.** (*The Parish Council does not own or manage that park, which in any case is needed for those who have hired the Hall during the day.*)
- (4) **More on-street parking will help calm the traffic in the village.**
- (5) **Refer the question to the Parking Review.** (*What we seek is a moratorium UNTIL the Parking Review reports its longer term plan.*)

Please let the Clerk know if you have a suggestion of what to do next..

ROBERTSBRIDGE POCKET PARK - Questionnaire results

22 residents completed the Questionnaire from the last newsletter and their views will help us formulate an action plan in the New Year. Thank you to all who took part.

Future uses suggested by the 22 participants are as follows:

Nature Study	16
Dog Walking	15
Family Walks	14
Playing	6
Other (cycling)	2

The main concern stated is the current muddy state of the access area under the bridge. Rother Valley Railway has been approached and it is anticipated that they will rectify this problem while they undertake their major works.

Another concern is the dog excrement which still appears in the pocket park despite the signs to which the majority of dog walkers undoubtedly adhere. This problem deters others, especially young children, from making full use of the park. We will be looking at improving signage and provision of bins.

A few respondents showed interest in joining a working party and we will be in contact with them soon.

The overall results reflect a wish to retain the original concept of the pocket park with some improvements but no great changes. Many helpful comments were made including:

- "to allow the natural re-generation of woodland into the nearby field..." (Note: this land does not belong to the PC - Ed.)*
- "seating and tables to sit and enjoy the river...."*
- "wider footpaths to take a mobility scooter..."*
- "continue to keep the pathways accessible.."*
- "keep the small paths as well as the main paths trimmed"*
- "open up the woodland to let in life and restore pond"*
- "signage to indicate wildlife and fauna in the park"*

Nigel Lockwood & Anne Wells

Making Tracks - After a break of action during the hot summer we are again making progress on clearing the path/bridleway between Church Bridge and the disused railway. We have uncovered 65 of the stepping stones but we have now reached the thickest area of blackthorn, which has slowed us down considerably. The end is nigh though and I would like to get a push on before our old friend the Rother swells too much.

So what of these stepping stones? One story I've heard is that they were put there by a former owner of the abbey, a Mr. Masterson. He put them in about a century ago so that he could walk to church without getting his cloak wet.

Earlier in the year I had a lovely chat with Mary Marshall (I still think of her as Sister Marshall) who said that when she came to the village she used to walk her dogs across there and it was always very wet and boggy. On her rounds to patients she was told that the stones were put along the side for 'pedestrians' and the centre of the track left clear for horse drawn vehicles and for the cows that were herded up and down the track twice a day for milking.

So there is the history so far. If anyone else has any recollections of the path or knows of its history, please let me know, my details are on the back page of this newsletter.

One job that is on our pending list is to replace the stile at the end of the path by Glenleigh Walk where we are hoping to put in a kiss-gate. Maybe we will have completed the job by the time you read this.

Finally, a reminder, please follow the footpaths, if you walk with dogs please keep them under close control and take their deposits home with you, that way you will keep within the law and are less likely to alienate the owners of the land on which you walk.

An online Rights of Way Map showing footpaths and bridleways across the County is now available on the East Sussex website at the following address:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/rightsofway/rightsofwaymap/intro.htm>

Charlie Beeden

Robertsbridge Summer Events Committee

Robertsbridge Jubilympics



You are cordially invited to...
The Robertsbridge 'Jubilympics'

Events on the day will be based around the Olympic and Jubilee celebrations with fun and games during the day followed by live music and dancing the night away.

Bank Holiday Monday 4th June at the Recreation Ground.

More details will follow shortly. Put the date in your diary now.

Rother Valley Railway – Progress at Robertsbridge - Since our last report there has been so much progress. The bridge building programme is well underway and has involved five structures between Robertsbridge station and Northbridge Street; it is estimated that they will be completed by the end of the year. Circumstances resulted in a change of construction company and currently the works are being carried out by DDF of Hastings who have made an excellent job. Additionally they have proved to be excellent ambassadors to the RVR by patiently answering the many questions posed by villagers who have found the rebuilding of the line very fascinating.

For the sake of simplicity RVR has renumbered the bridges numerically 1 to 5 from Robertsbridge Eastwards, with number one being the first bridge on the branch leaving the main line station.

Bridge No.1 -Because this structure is interesting and carries additional support beams dating back to the Kent & East Sussex era, it was decided to carry out repairs rather than demolish the abutments and start again. The base of the bridge which allows for a footpath and the petty sewer has been thoroughly excavated allowing for the construction of a concrete base with reinforced steel which stabilises both the eastern and western abutment.

Bridge No. 2 - This bridge was built for the Rother Valley Railway by Southern Water during construction of the pipeline from Darwell to Bewl Reservoir. The work now required is removal of the steel deck for shot blasting, repairs and painting prior to re-installation towards the end of this year.

Bridge No. 3 - This bridge was demolished and replaced by two new abutments and a concrete base. This splendid new structure is now complete and will receive a new steel deck towards the end of this year.

Bridge No. 4 - Work has started on this bridge is nearing completion. It is being re-built in the same style as bridge numbers 2 and 3, although it is smaller owing to the continuing reduction in height of the railway embankment as it nears Northbridge Street

Bridge No. 5 - This is the smallest of the five bridges and is adjacent to Northbridge Street. As the river Rother, slightly to the west of this site has severely scoured the southern bank of this water course, steel piling has taken place to make the railway embankment sound. Once the work has been done, this bridge will be completed in readiness for a new steel deck and subsequent track laying.

As reported earlier, the single track steel spans that were sourced from Staplehurst by a generous supporter, will be used to provide the decks for bridges 2,3,4 and 5. They are being transported to a specialist restoration company at Lamberhurst which will carry out shot blasting and painting in readiness for final repairs before being brought back to Robertsbridge.

In addition to these spans, two longer single track bridges were sourced from Reading. Network Rail had declared them redundant and these spanned narrow roads in the former goods yard west of Reading station. These bridges, some 20 metres in length, are planned to cross bridge no. 6, over the River Rother east of Northbridge Street and a further stream at bridge no. 7 east of the A21 Robertsbridge by-pass. This work will be part of phase 6 and the programme of work at this location has not been finalised.

Sheet Piling at Northbridge Street

Because the railway embankment has been severely scoured by the flow of river water at the Eastern side of Robertsbridge, a contractor has been employed to rectify this damage by installing deep sheet steel piles. These will be faced with timber to enhance their appearance. When all the above works have been completed, track laying will commence during the winter months.

SALEHURST & ROBERTSBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

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The Parish Office is open to the public at the following times:

Tuesday 9am to 11am
Thursday 2pm to 4pm

Rother District Council

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Keep vigilant! A number of residents have recently received emails suggesting that a company called PDS is putting cards through letter boxes saying that they tried to deliver a parcel and residents needed to contact a premium rate 'phone number. The email suggests that when calling this number you just heard a recorded message and were billed £315 for the call - obviously very worrying especially at this time of the year when residents are (hopefully!) expecting to receive parcels. But, this is an old email being re-circulated on a 'chain mail' basis.

A recent article in 'The Guardian' newspaper asked Phonepay Plus the UK Premium Rate Regulator for comment and they said the following:

"This service was shut down in 2005 and the company running the scam was fined £10,000. The service is no longer running and has not been running since December 2005." They asked that the email not be forwarded to others as it just perpetuates the worry. If you receive a card through your door which you do not think is genuine and which asks you to dial a premium rate number you can contact Phonepay Plus on 0800 500 212 (free phone) Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Also note that calls to 0906 numbers are charged at a maximum of £1.50p per minute.

This is reassuring but other 'clever' folks might try again so be vigilant!

*Walks in Salehurst
and Robertsbridge*



David Allen

If you are the proud possessor of a copy of 'Walks in Salehurst and Robertsbridge' then you may have encountered some problems in following a part of the route on Walk 5. This has been caused by changes in field use and growth of shrub making the original directions unclear. My apologies for this but the following amendment should help. It is hoped that in the future our footpath group will be able to arrange some additional marking to help.

On page 21, 3rd line down beginning "In 150 yards..." and 4 lines down ending "...into the grounds of Higham House" – replace with the following:

In 150 yards, turn left and keeping the spinney and deep gulley close on your left continue ahead for approx. 300 yards until reaching the boundary fence of Higham House. Turn right along the line of the fence and in 300 yards where the field path bears right, turn left over a stile into the woods and then immediately right uphill and in a short distance over another stile into the grounds of Higham House.

David Allen

Stop Press -

Battle Area Community Bus - Eastbourne 8th December

Arrive Eastbourne Arndale Centre 11am and return from Arndale Centre 3pm - Free with bus pass or minimal charge without - phone 01424 772001 to book your place for pick-up in Robertsbridge

And a final thought: - "The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits"
Albert Einstein