



ROTTINGDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

March 2011

Councillors: Mr J Bustard, Mr F Considine, Mr J Cumming, Mr K Humphreys, Mr B Parsons
Mr B Pinchen, Mrs S Prince, Mr G Rhodes and Mr W Spencer

Parish Clerk: Mrs J Talbot - (PO Box 134, Brighton, BN51 9DB or 01273 306 300)

THE ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

Thursday 21st April 2011 at the **WHITEWAY CENTRE** at 7.30pm.

Thursday May 5th is a very important Election day for all Rottingdean residents that are on the electoral roll. On that day you will be able to vote for the candidates of your choice or you may even have put your name forward to stand as a Parish Councillor. Please remember your vote is important to the village.

Your Parish Council is made up of nine elected representatives, none of whom take any salary, allowances or general expenses. Only if more than 9 people put their name forward will the election be put to a vote, thus allowing you to choose who you want to be your representatives. As it happens, **at least** two of the present Parish Councillors are not intending to stand again, Sally Prince and myself. This means that even if only 2 new parishioners volunteer to put their names forward, there will **still not** be a vote. Only if more decide to do so will the electorate be able to choose from those standing. Can I also point out that, once Sally has stood down, all of the remaining Councillors are men.

We closely monitor every planning application in our area and all of the City's proposals that affect our Village and we attempt to influence its decisions whenever we feel it necessary. We also initiate our own proposals for the improvement of the Village, either fully funding them ourselves but more often encouraging joint funding with the City Council. For most subjects, we nominate a Lead Councillor, who is responsible to the Parish Council for all activities and contacts with City Officers, contractors etc. Thus there is a shared workload that falls on all Parish Councillors over and above attending the monthly meeting, and much of it needs to be done during normal working hours as that is when the City Council officers and most contractors are available. Jean Talbot is our Parish Clerk who offers both legal and other guidance whenever required.

Should you choose to stand as a Parish Councillor, you will need to contact the City's Electoral Officer, Clair Wardle on 291997 as soon as possible. Her office will send you a nomination pack containing your nomination papers, guidance notes and contact details. You will also be able to attend the count of voting papers as it takes place.

John Cumming, Chairman

FINANCE REPORT

The precept for the current financial year that ends on 31st March 2011 was again retained, for a third year running, at £27,000. This is the amount which is collected from the residents of the Parish of Rottingdean each year with the Council Tax set by the City Council and equates to just £17.91 per annum (34.4p per week) for a band D property in the financial year 2010/2011.

The Parish Council sets the level of precept having taken into account the normal running costs of the council including the Clerk's salary, room hire, stationery, postage and phone and the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter. Each year we also budget to spend on 'special projects' for the benefit of the Parish. This year, our donations and expenses have included a further £2,000 to this year's Spring Music Festival and £1,100 on the pond which we believe now looks a lot better than it has for some time. At the February 2011 meeting it was agreed to contribute to a scheme to improve the Terraces beneath the White Horse to make it more welcoming and also to enable further improvements which would allow entertainment and performances in the future.

We always have some funds available for special projects, some of which are fully funded by us whilst others we share the cost with the City Council. Thankfully our funds can be carried forward and do not need to be spent within the financial year like Local Authority budgets. If you have a project in mind that you would like us to consider please let one of the councillors know.

Geoff Rhodes, Responsible Finance Officer

John Bustard, Deputy Finance Officer

STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Parish Council continues to be represented by 2 Councillors on the City Council's Standards Committee, which ensures the maintenance of high standards among City and Parish Councillors. Nothing of major importance to the Parish Council has been on the agenda during the last year. The Localism Bill, expected to pass into law this year, removes the requirement for a Standards Committee and a Code of Conduct. The City Council will consider whether to set up a voluntary committee and the Parish Council will need to consider its position when the Localism Act comes into force.

Geoff Rhodes & John Bustard

PLANNING

Last year, I stated that there were three large projects for Rottingdean which had been ongoing for some time, these were the Denes Motors site, Newick House Nursing Home and the Winton Hall site. Twelve months on, the only building activity seen at these sites is the demolition of Winton Hall in preparation for a new block of houses. Two further planning applications have

produced quite a lot of opposition within the Village, namely the site of 28 Marine Drive and the garden of a house in Challoners Close. Both these applications were approved by the City in spite of the objections raised by neighbours and the Parish Council.

When the Planning Sub-Committee receives plans from the City it has a strict time limit in which to reply with any relevant comments. This time period is approximately a fortnight, which is hard to achieve. It is, therefore, imperative that anyone who wishes to object to planning applications should do so as quickly as possible, and it is most helpful if you could express your opinions to one of us and give us copies of letters written to the City so that we can take note of your comments before finalising our own reply.

The Planning sub-committee consists of Ken Humphreys, Chairman, Frank Considine, Brian Parsons, Sally Prince and Bill Spencer.

THE BEACON HILL NATURE RESERVE

Following our plea for volunteers to help record the flora and fauna of Beacon Hill, Peter Whitcomb, Amanda Connolly and John Dalling have come forward and are now our butterfly specialists, and Barbara Gunn and Ged Gannaway monitor our birds. Peter also monitors the flora, whilst Ian Squires will be monitoring night-time moths. The excellent Annual Report, compiled by Alan Holden our Wildlife Co-ordinator, is available to read in the Grange library. The stock fences at the south and north ends of the reserve are now in place, the gates have been hung for the winter months and sheep have already grazed most of the hill. This summer, we will for the first time begin to see how much improvement to the grass sward has resulted from reverting to the traditional way of maintaining the Downs.

John Cumming, Chairman of the Beacon Hill Working Group & Bill Spencer

AIR POLLUTION IN ROTTINGDEAN

The City Council has been monitoring air pollution within the city and have detected nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels of 41.5 (micrograms per cubic metre) for Vicarage Lane and 46 for the High Street, which are weighted average figures. Maximum recommended levels are 40. NO₂ is a respiratory irritant associated with both acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) effects on our health, the main source being diesel engines. The City Council will be

conducting a detailed assessment of NO2 during this year.

Frank Considine

PARISH COUNCIL WEB PAGES

The Parish Council is in the process of designing and building its own web pages, where we will be displaying our agenda for forthcoming meetings, minutes of our last 3 meetings, this annual report, a monthly record of current planning applications and the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve annual report. All of these documents and other information will be available on www.rottingdean-pc.gov.uk in the near future.

Frank Considine

TOILETS ON THE SEAFRONT.

Following our representations last year, a 'portaloo' type toilet was placed adjacent to the old toilet block for the summer period. It provided separate facilities for men and women but was a far from satisfactory solution and there is no doubt that improvements are needed. An attempt by the City Council to justify a commercial base (a café) failed and the only way forward is either a complete rebuild (unlikely because of economic constraints) or re-opening of part of the old toilet block.

Frank Considine

THE A259 & HIGHWAY MATTERS

A259 Bus Lanes

Contrary to expectations, statistics indicate that there have been fewer accidents in the stretch where bus lanes are in place. But fears remain that there could be a serious accident especially as double white lines are not considered appropriate by the City.

Other Highway Matters

As mentioned last year, nothing has been done about making West Street one way eastwards because of the Southern Water works. Hopefully, the City will soon start to make this happen. The City Council has conducted a major review in connection with the possible introduction of 20mph speed limits/areas/zones. Of interest for Rottingdean was that consideration be given to reducing speed limits on roads primarily for residential use, and on those roads where high numbers of vulnerable road users use the roads, particularly those roads that are routes to and outside schools, parks and playgrounds, sports and leisure facilities, community buildings, older people's care homes, and local shops. However,

these measures should ideally not include the use of speed humps but high quality design measures which are fit for purpose for local areas.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Despite a request at last year's meeting for sightings of HGVs illegally passing through the village to be reported to the Parish Council these were few and far between. With the results of air pollution monitoring now being made available, this should put additional pressure on the City for more prominent signage to warn HGV drivers against illegal passage through the village. While work is being done to widen the road at Woodingdean we are again trying to persuade the authorities to more emphatically direct HGVs to turn right towards Brighton.

Cycling on the Undercliff

Working with our Ward Councillors, progress has been made on clarifying the situation with regard to cycling along the Undercliff Walk. New signs have been erected emphasising that pedestrians have priority, that cyclists should warn pedestrians of their approach and limit their speed to 10mph. At Ovingdean, a completely pedestrian area with barriers for use at peak times has been created. Discussions are continuing about the need for additional signage and barriers to be put in place at Rottingdean.

John Bustard

THE POND

Our new contractor, Peter the Pond, has now got the pond into a much better state, both to look at and in terms of its health as he has removed some inappropriate plants and brought in other more suitable ones. He will be returning in the Spring for a minor tidy up but will do the next main work in the autumn. In the meantime, Brian has built a duck shelter on the island, which they are already using.

John Cumming and Brian Parsons

SOUTHERN WATER

At last year's meeting, concern was expressed about the possibility that Southern Water's sewer construction works would severely disrupt the West St car park area for over a year. As a result of our concerns, Southern Water has reacted positively with disruption reduced and peak visitor times avoided.

Barry Pinchen

THE GREEN

A hand rail has been installed at the bottom of Dean Court Road, in response to a request from residents who found those last few yards dangerously slippery in winter. (We are also investigating the provision of railings at the end of the twitten behind St Aubyn's School where it opens on to the A259). Opposite the Convent on the edge of the Green is an unsightly crater, made by tractors and lorries mounting the kerb. We have asked the City Council to repair this verge.

Sally Prince

WHITE HORSE TERRACES.

It is many years since plans for re-furbishing the terraces in front of the White Horse Hotel (which the City own) were first proposed. The local traders would be glad of anything that increases trade. Residents want an area where they can sit comfortably in the sun. Tourists appreciate somewhere clean and attractive to sit with their families to eat their sandwiches. What has been acknowledged by everyone is the failure of the terraces to fulfil any of these needs satisfactorily. In 2008 Explore Living applied for planning permission to build additional accommodation at the Marina. When a big building programme is allowed, the developer is obliged to contribute towards local community projects, which included the redesign of the Terraces. Planning permission has yet to be granted; therefore no money is available in the foreseeable future.

Recently it has again been proposed to use the area as an open air entertainment site beginning with a central relaying of the surface and the supplying of more benches and picnic furniture. During the next financial year, it is hoped to adjust the walling and storage areas in order to create a stage with the audience facing north and a concert platform facing south. This project has the support of the City Council, the Parish Council, Rottingdean Traders, PARC. and Dr Roy Wales who is anticipating Summer Concerts overlooking the sea.

Sally Prince

LOCAL ACTION TEAM

Recently the Rottingdean Local Action Team was revived in line with other similar organisations across the City. In partnership with the police, the aim is to see that any signs of trouble are dealt with as effectively as possible. Ward Councillor Mary Mears is the Chairman, and is very

supportive but her time is precious, as it is for us all. The Rottingdean and Saltdean LAT's have been amalgamated, their meetings arranged alternately at the Whiteway Centre and the Saltdean Community Centre. Committee members are drawn from local village organisations including Longhill School, the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Watch.

Sally Prince

GRIT BINS

Many times residents ask "What does the Parish Council actually do"? One situation occurred during the winter of 2009/2010 when severe weather conditions made many roads and pavements extremely dangerous. The Parish Council reviewed which were the most difficult roads and consequently paid for the installation of 10 grit bins. At the request of residents in Nevill Road, we applied to the City Council to have 2 further bins installed. However they have used up their supply of grit bins but will consider this request again during the summer.

Bill Spencer

LINKS WITH THE POLICE & THE PARISH

Although we regularly get reports from our PCSO, Chris Kingswood, on incidents that have occurred in our area and for which a crime report number has been issued, invariably there are other incidents that the Parish Council only get to hear about by talking to friends, neighbours or traders, when the information is often second or third hand. It is always useful to have first hand knowledge. Please tell Ken in the Post Office, Bill at Tele Radio or any other member of the Parish Council, so we can in return ensure that Chris Kingswood is notified. The other most asked questions are "How do I get in touch with the Parish Council" and "How do I know what is on the agenda"? The agenda is published on the Parish Council noticeboard situated on the wall of the flint building at the bottom of Nevill Road. Soon you will also be able to read it and contact the Parish Council using its website but in the meantime there is always either Ken in Rottingdean Post Office, Bill at Rottingdean Tele Radio and Jean our excellent Parish Clerk. And please remember that our monthly Council and fortnightly Planning meetings are held in public in the Whiteway Centre. You are always welcome.

Bill Spencer