

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS AND MISC. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED**Miscellaneous Correspondence & Information Received**

- **RDC Members Bulletin January 2023** – forwarded to Members 31/1/23
- **County Councillor's February Report** – forwarded to Members 4/2/23
- **Covid Remembrance Event email** – forwarded to Members 8/2/23
- **A21 Safety Package Highways England email** – forwarded to Members 28/2/23
- **County Councillor's March report** – forwarded to Members 2/3/23
- **RDC Members Bulletin February 2023** – forwarded to Members 9/3/23
- **NALC Chief Exec Bulletin 24 February** - forwarded to Members 9/3/23
- **RDC Debate Not Hate Campaign Briefing** – forwarded to Members 9/3/23

Parish Council Elections

Elections May 2023 – the Ordinary Elections for the Parish Councils (and the District Council Elections) will take place on Thursday 4 May 2023. All Members of the PC 'retire' on 9 May, when the newly elected Members will take office (except for the Chairman, who remains in post – even if not re-elected – until a Chairman of the Council is elected at the Annual Parish Council Meeting on 15 May). All current Members are able to re-stand if they wish; nomination papers have to be *hand* delivered to Bexhill Town Offices between 27th March and 4pm on 4th April. If there are nine or less valid nominations, all will be automatically elected, without a poll. But if there are more than nine, there will be a poll, organised by RDC, alongside the District one, on 4 May.

We haven't had a poll for Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council since 2007. As a note of interest – in that 2007 election, Gillian Smith was re-elected for a second or third term (unfortunately, the only records we don't have are for 2005, so I am not sure whether she was elected for the first time in 1995 or 1999). So she has been on the PC for at least 24 years.

If you are intending to re-stand, nomination packs are now available on RDC website, with detailed instructions on the process. Please check the info and guidelines carefully as the rules (national) are very strict. Get your application in early, so that if anything is not quite right RDC will have time to sort it with you before the deadline.

Unfortunately, RDC are not allowed to disclose how many valid nominations have been received, until the official publication of the statement on 5 April – *after nominations close*! So we will not know until then how many nominations we have or whether or not there will be a poll on 4 May. If there are insufficient candidates, we will be back in the co-option scenario.

Gill and I would like to thank all of those standing down for your contributions to the parish, the Council and your support. With very best wishes for your next steps.

Streetlight Project update on progress

The column replacements have started; the timetable is governed by UKPN, who have to do the mains cable work. Our lighting contractor does the physical side of removing and replacing the columns and lanterns, so they attend/work together. We are removing four old concrete columns and one cast iron and replacing with new steel columns and, following dialogue with neighbouring properties, we are completely removing an old cast iron column from Salehurst (in the garden of Post Office Terrace) and not replacing it. Residents felt it contributed little as it is very close to cottages and really only serves their parking areas, and they all have outside lights. It is scheduled to be removed on 11 April.

Three replacements have been completed already: Andrews Close cul-de-sac, Fayre Meadow cul-de-sac and Fair Lane junction with Fayre Meadow. The next replacement will be Northbridge Street, by Bayham House, scheduled for Sunday 14 May (East Sussex Highways would not issue a licence for the necessary road closure on a weekday because of disruption to buses). The last will be the old concrete column by the Parish Office, which due to proximity to the school (East Sussex Highways rules due to requirement for traffic lights) has to be done in school holidays and UKPN's first available date is 25 July.

The replacement lanterns on the rest of our existing columns will gradually be replaced over the next few months. When complete, all our lamps will be new LED, which is much more efficient, less intrusive and much more environmentally friendly, complying with Dark Skies criteria.

Clerks Weekly Briefing

One suggestion at the Council Visioning Day on 4th March was for the Clerks to prepare a weekly briefing. A suggested format was circulated to Members on 14th March which showed what the Clerks had been working on. We welcome comments as to whether this is what you want.

Queen's Green Canopy

A swamp cypress tree was planted in the Pocket Park on 15th March 2023, to commemorate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee last year. Thanks to the Members and Parish Tree Wardens. A suggestion that a bench is also desirable at this point is on the agenda for discussion on 20th March.

Rural Grass Cutting

The Parish Council received an invitation from East Sussex County Council to take part in the project to treat rural grass verges as wildlife corridors, meaning they are not cut early in the season, and then only for visibility. We had to respond by 10 March so after consulting with the Chairman and Amenities Working Group (Cllrs Todd and Palamarczuk) we signed up to take part and monitor the response (there were numerous concerns / complaints from residents last year).

Annual Clean Up Day 26 February 2023

The Annual Clean Up Day took place earlier this year so that Robertsbridge Scout Group could help organise the event. Although notably colder it remained dry and a large amount of rubbish (44 bags and some miscellaneous items) was collected by 80+ volunteers, and a number of street signs washed. We would like to thank Rother District Council for supplying equipment and disposing of the rubbish, and Darvell Bruderhof Community for providing cookies for the volunteers. We are in discussion with Rother District Council about Biffa doing regular removal of rubbish from the A21 laybys. Residents are particularly concerned by the amount of rubbish in the large northbound layby just above the Robertsbridge roundabout. Thank you to the resident who cleared the rubbish in the opposite southbound layby.

Annual Parish Meeting 6th March 2023

The Annual Parish Meeting followed a similar format to previous annual parish meetings, except that the majority of business was conducted before the break for refreshments. This was well received, however there was too much time for people to gather before reports so it is suggested that next year doors open at 7pm with the formal part of the meeting starting at 7.30pm. We welcome ideas on how we can attract parents of young families and groups for younger residents to attend. Should we consider holding the meeting on a Saturday as they have done in Battle?

Retirement of Malcolm Johnston

Malcolm Johnson is retiring as Rother District Council Chief Executive in May. Members are asked to record their thanks to him for his time with RDC.

RALC

RALC has returned to face-to-face meetings, to be held at Staplecross Village Hall. If Cllr Branford is unable to attend another Members can attend the next meeting on 12 April. Alex Sharp, who is Parish Clerk at Catsfield, has been appointed as new RALC Secretary.

Cost of Living crisis

The weekly warm space organised by Helping Hands will finish at the end of March. The Council has financially supported this initiative and we publicly thank Helping Hands for organising this. The Council will ask Helping Hands to assess whether it should be relaunched in the Autumn.

Environment Agency - Flood Alleviation Scheme

Robertsbridge demountable flood barrier deployment exercise will take place Thursday 20 April, from 09:30am. They will start in Station Road, then move on to the Clappers. Traffic lights will be in operation (they won't be completely closing the roads).

Coronation of King Charles III on 6 May 2023

Picnic in the Park, Saturday 6th May, 2-6pm, Recreation Ground - Robertsbridge Bonfire Society is taking a lead on this free, something-for-everyone community event, aimed at bringing everyone together to celebrate and have fun, without breaking the bank in these Clerks' Report March 2023

difficult times. We are very grateful to Ria Paine, Chairman of the Bonfire Society for taking this on. Ria will update Members at the PCM on 20th March.

Other events over the weekend include:

- Friday 5th May - School Barn Dance @ The Village Hall (& Rock and Roll @ The Club)
- Evening Saturday 6th May - Status Quo Tribute Band @ The Club. All ticket event. Music starts at 8pm)
- Sunday 7th May – *Soap Box Derby* in Salehurst, followed by live music at Salehurst Halt

Commemorative gifts for children attending Salehurst Primary and Robertsbridge Children's Services will be considered at the PCM on 20th March.

Salehurst Cemetery

Activity - since the last meeting (30th January 2023) there has been one ashes interment and arrangements are in progress for three more in May and one in July. There have been no purchases of Exclusive Rights. Two applications have been received for new memorials.

Members Training / Briefings / Conferences

Keeping up to date is an important aspect of being a Members and these courses are a valuable way of keeping up with current issues and changes, as well as meeting other Members and hearing different views and news.

ESALC can commission courses for a new Members or chairmanship training for a whole council, via Trevor Leggo, who will discuss specific needs and deliver the session. The dates for general briefing/training sessions (open to all/any parish) can be found on the ESALC website at [ESALC](#).

ESALC have recently announced Breakthrough Communications are working with them to provide a new programme of communications and compliance-focused training courses for parish and town councils across East Sussex. The details can be found here <https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/calc-training-events/>

If you are interested in any training, please let us know, so we can book you in.

Events attended:

ESALC Clerks Forum 31st January - Karen Ripley

Rother Local Elections Briefing 23rd February – Karen Ripley

Events booked:

None, pending elections.

Karen

Gill

Karen Ripley
Parish Clerk

Gill Colquhoun
Assistant Clerk