

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS AND MISC. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Miscellaneous Correspondence & Information Received

- **NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin** – forwarded to members 25/1/24. 1/2/24, 8/2/24, 15/2/24, 22/2/24, 29/2/24, 7/3/24
- **Rother Informal Parking Review Consultation** – forwarded to Member 5/2/24
- **County Councillor's reports** – February report forwarded to Members 5/2/24; March report forwarded to Members 12/3/24.
- **Love Our Rother** – event email forwarded to Members 6/2/24
- **Pothole Update** – email from Cllr Redstone forwarded to members 8/2/24
- **RDC Members Bulletin – February 2024** – forwarded to members 29/2/24
- **1066 Business Awards** – email forwarded to members 5/3/24
- **Rural Bulletin** – forwarded to members 5/3/24

Station Road Resurfacing

We await an update at our biannual meeting with East Sussex Highways on 21st March. ESH has advised that due to the need for a diversion whilst works are in progress it cannot be completed until the A21 works / closures are finished.

Street Lighting

We have been contacted by Consultants for Rother Valley Railway regarding Column 11 on The Clappers, which is sited close to where the road crossing will be. The Clerk is liaising with them, and our lighting contractor, to establish the best outcome. Whether it is replaced (with a new column) in a new location will depend on what lighting, if any, will be provided with the level crossing. Discussions are ongoing.

Football Club Contract – Cllr Todd has been working with the Clerk to progress this. A meeting is due to take place with the Football Club soon to agree final details.

Grass Verge Cutting

As you know, the verge cutting is the responsibility of East Sussex Highways (ESH) and is split in to two areas, urban and rural. **Urban** covers most of the main built-up areas within the 30mph speed limit and ESH offers options with this, including 'self-delivery' (with strict conditions). We have opted to pay for an extra four cuts above the standard two, giving six cuts per year. As well as that, ever since 2000, when the village planted the daffodils as part of the Millenium commemorations, we have (under an agreement with ESCC) cut the grass on the bank of the high pavement in the High Street. Unfortunately, the contractor we use for this has very recently advised that he is no longer able to do it. Due to the short notice, we are looking into this being done by one of our other contractors for the coming season (he does the Recreation Ground and Cemetery), to be reviewed for next year.

Unfortunately, following the ESH change of contractor last year there was confusion at their end and they cut the grass on the bank (damaging a Bonfire Society banner in the process). Since we queried this, ESCC has advised that they have no record of an agreement for the Parish Council to cut the grass!!! I have now had to request a new agreement, which is in progress!!!

Rural cutting applies to the rest of the roads in our parish that are outside of the 30mph limit, including the further parts of Brightling Road, Bishops Lane and Salehurst. Parish councils are not allowed to do this mowing in East Sussex, but we have recently been offered the option to reduce the early season cut from a standard 1m swathe everywhere, to only visibility cuts for safety at junctions and on the inside of bends where sight lines for road users may be obscured by vegetation. (Single track lanes are excluded for safety reasons.) We have chosen this option for environmental reasons, officially referred to as *Environmental Enhancement Service (reduced rural service)*.

Advertising boards and banners on the Highway (specifically the High Street bank)

As mentioned above, in the process of cutting the bank in the High Street, the ESH contractor damaged an RBS banner warning about no parking on bonfire night (this was early November so a very late cut!). However, ESH has responded to advise that because no licence had been granted to place the banner on the 'highway', they are not responsible. Therefore, whilst RBS can claim compensation for the banner, it may be successful.

This has also highlighted the matter of boards and banners placed on the bank. The Parish Council has, in the past, not objected to (or reported to ESH re lack of a licence) boards and posters for local events and this has been pretty well respected, with limited size structures for a limited period, which have been removed promptly following the event. However, we have recently received a complaint about 'campaign or political' items, following the placing of the 'No development on our field' banner, relating to the planning application for land adjacent to Bishops Lane. (We don't know who placed, or subsequently removed, the banner.)

There is also an associated concern regarding attaching boards etc to the lamppost and the fingerpost (which is already leaning). (The RBS banner was supported on its own, thin posts.) We are not in a position to authorise them, but we could publicise, via social media, a plea to limit boards and banners to local (Salehurst & Robertsbridge) events – not campaign or political – and at 'own risk' in terms of both damage *and* enforcement by ESH (if placed without a licence). We also need to consider whether it is appropriate for items to be attached to / supported by the lamppost and/or fingerpost, both of which are maintained at public expense (by the PC). Or is a limited size board or poster tied to the lamppost (the current Jazz Club one is an example) a better option than endless separate posts being knocked in? This needs some discussion (see Agenda item 129a).

NALC Briefing on Council Email Addresses

This was forwarded to Members by email on 21/2/24. NALC now recommends the use of .gov email addresses. We haven't adopted this previously because our email addresses were well established (in use for over 20 years). At that time it wasn't possible to have a .gov address, and even when that changed a few years ago, it was complicated and long-winded – the article refers to ongoing work to make this more straightforward. However, there is counter argument for not

linking Parish & Town Councils to a .gov address; the briefing suggests that using official government branding creates trust, but that could be debatable in the current climate. P&T Councils are independent, not funded or directly controlled by Government and, whilst it is important to be professional and have dedicated council addresses, the .gov suffix is not essential to achieving that. We are fulfilling all the bullet points for using official, rather than personal, email addresses.

As use of .gov is a current recommendation by NALC, you may want to consider / debate for an up-to-date decision either way. (See Agenda item 129b).

New dog waste bins – two new (previously approved) dog waste bins have been added to the emptying round from April. The Village Steward will fit them in the next couple of weeks; one on George Hill at the junction with Bishops Lane cut-through and one at the top of Fair Lane before the footbridge across the A21.

D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024

Hurst Green Parish Council has confirmed that they are making arrangements for the day time (tractor run) and evening (beacon lighting) on 6th June. They have asked us some specific questions which we still need to answer (see Agenda item 136b):

- Would we be interested in doing a parade of vehicles too, to meet up at The Stage?
- Would we like to be involved with the Beacon event at The Stage?
- Do we have any funds that we could add into a joint pot?

Annual Village Tidy Day – Sunday 3rd March 2024 – successfully took place with over 80 volunteers of all ages. The Scouts helped again and Cllrs Barden and O'Hara joined in. The Darvell Community kindly supplied cookies for volunteers again this year, which are always popular.

A21 at Johns Cross

It has been confirmed that, although Mountfield Parish Council lobbied for the proposed increase of speed limit through Johns Cross to be overruled, this will not happen. So, as part of the A21 Safety Package the new speed limit will be 50mph from Robertsbridge roundabout, then 40mph through Johns Cross returning to 50mph just before Vine Hall School.

Village Steward

Gavin has undertaken repairs / refurbishments at the Recreation Ground toilets. He is working his hours on weekday afternoons and weekends (see Village Steward report for details of work completed). His work has been very positively received by the local community and is immensely valuable to the Clerks in getting tasks progressed. His hours will increase from twelve to sixteen per week from April, as approved at the last Parish Council Meeting (23/24-110b).

Salehurst Cemetery

Activity - since the last meeting (22nd January 2024) - there have been three ashes interments, and arrangements are in progress for two more. There have been three purchases of Exclusive Rights and two burials (new graves). Two applications have been received/approved for new memorials and two new memorials have been fitted.

Members Training / Briefings / Conferences

Keeping up to date is an important aspect of being a Member and the organised 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, or bespoke 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 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. It is important that new Councillors take up training and that ***all Members periodically attend update sessions***.

Events attended:

Climate Literacy Training by Community Energy South - David

HMRC Webinar What's New for 2024/25 - Karen

South East Water briefing 23rd February - Roger

Training/events booked:

Rother Clerk's Network meeting - Karen

The Future Shape of the Planning System – Karen and Gill

Trends in Local Government Finance – Karen

New Councillor Training - Kirsty

Karen

Gill

Karen Ripley
Parish Clerk

Gill Colquhoun
Assistant Clerk