

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

- **NALC Chief Executive's Bulletin** – forwarded to members 21/9/23, 28/9/23, 5/10/23, 12/10/23, 19/10/23, 2/11/23, 9/11/23, 16/11/23
- **High Weald AONB Management Plan Consultation** – email forwarded to Planning Committee 26/9/23
- **ESALC AGM & Conference** – details forwarded to members 26/9/23
- **Rother Review of Polling Districts and Places** – email forwarded to members 6/10/23
- **RDC Members Bulletin – September and October 2023** – forwarded to members 14/11/23 and 31/10/23
- **County Councillor's reports**– November report forwarded to Members 31/10/23; October report forwarded to members 14/11/23
- **Rother Cabinet Minutes including information on council finances and Blackfriars Development**– forwarded to members 9/11/23
- **Winter Readiness event details** – forwarded to member 14/11/23
- **Climate and ecology bill** - email received from Zero Hour on 18/10/23
- **Woodland Trust** - open to applications for free - trees email received from ESALC on 19/10/23
- **Civility and respect pledge** - survey email received from ESALC 31/10/23

Councillor Microsoft 365 Email accounts

All members are now using their Council 365 email accounts. If you need any help or support, or encounter any problems with your email accounts, you can contact the Clerks; we will arrange for help via Uniserve.

Station Road Resurfacing

East Sussex Highways has now confirmed that Brightling Road will be resurfaced at the same time as Station Road (from the level crossing up to Darvel entrance) by Balfour Beatty, East Sussex Highways contractor, in early 2024. This is a great outcome and we are now waiting for confirmation of the date and depth of resurfacing proposed. Recent works to improve drainage along Station Road was recently carried out. However, this was followed by flooding outside 'Rampions' during high water levels on the weekend of 4th November, due to a blocked drain. This has been reported to the ESCC drainage engineer and is being investigated, ahead of the resurfacing.

Southeastern Ticket Office Consultation

The proposal to close ticket offices nationwide was withdrawn by the Government on 31st October, ahead of consultation on all Southeastern stations outside the London metro area, i.e. including Robertsbridge, which is good news for our community. Sarah Jacques (Sussex Outreach Support/Rother Voluntary Action) is attending our November Parish Council meeting to outline proposals for a mobile advice unit at Robertsbridge station.

D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024

We are waiting for Hurst Green Parish Council to let us know what is planned for Hurst Green and whether we can join with the lighting of the beacon on The Stage field, as part of national celebrations on 6th June 2024 at 9.15pm [D-DAY 80 BEACONS](#). Cllrs Bishop and Dulley have been looking at other ideas and will report to the PCM.

Recreation Ground

- **Playground upgrades** - repairs and refurbishment of the playground within the Recreation Ground are mostly complete, apart from a few items (ropes / nets / painting etc.). This is the first major refurbishment of the playground for over ten years. With the addition of the grant funding from South East Water we have been able to add three additional toddler springy rockers (installed 16/11/23) and provide extra new and replacement parts. This will also provide some extra benches - the AWG is still looking into suitable styles. We will promote the refurbishments and extra items once the works are finished.
- **Car Park** – much needed works to improve the surface of the car park have been carried out. Potholes have been filled and some large protruding stones levelled, with additional aggregate laid. The tarmac surface at the entrance has been renewed and extended.

Closure of Robertsbridge Recycling Point

Further to notification from Rother District Council. the recycling point in the Station car park closed week beginning 29th October. The two Salvation Army bins for clothes and shoes remain.

Road closures for Remembrance

Karen completed all the necessary documents (including risk assessments and traffic plans) and applied for the necessary road closure orders for the Armistice Day ceremony at the War Memorial, and for Remembrance Sunday including the parade to and from the Church in Salehurst. This involves road closures from Rother District Council for the ESCC village roads, and National Highways for the A21. The Royal British Legion (RBL) and uniformed organisations wanted to retain the long-held tradition of a parade to and from the Church, as the Church service is an important part of Remembrance. Last year the Parish Council agreed to take on responsibility for the parade (RBL is no longer insured to run it). But in order to safely cross the A21, a (short) closure is necessary and National Highways rules require that a fully regulated traffic management company is used to manage any closure or delay, diversions, signage etc. This of course was an unexpected expense, which we have not had before (there is no charge for the actual road closures). We engaged Sunbelt Rentals (who are also used by the Environment Agency for flood defence deployment exercises, so they know the area). They recommended the best option was to provide traffic lights at the A21, and they agreed to manage them, plus the RDC road closures for the village streets, at half the normal cost because it was for Remembrance (we had to pay £400 + vat). The Council needs to consider whether it is prepared to fund this going forward (from 2024) and consideration will be on the agenda for the PCM on 20/11/23..

Local PCSO Support

The Clerks met Rachael Scott, the named PCSO for our parish who is based at Battle, on 14th November, as she was unable to attend the November Council meeting. Others within the Rother

team will answer queries if she is off duty, and her colleague, Chloe Cameron, attended Robertsbridge Remembrance Day on 12th November at our invitation. A small team of four PCSO's and two officers will attend Robertsbridge Bonfire. PCSO's are encouraged to attend local events if operational duties allow, and we have provided her with details of the main events. All residents are encouraged to report incidents online or via 101 (it was recognised there can be a long wait on calls to 101). Details of our PCSO's can be seen on the following link:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/area/your-area/sussex/rother/robertsbridge-and-salehurst/on-the-team/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area>

Village Steward

Gavin works mainly at weekends now that the evenings are dark and is therefore doing a few less hours. We have ordered him a new hi viz waterproof jacket. The list of tasks he completed in September and October is included with the agenda for PCM 20/11/23. He helped clear drains and lay sandbags on 4th November; he is currently checking the grit bins in the village in preparation for winter.

Bishops Meadow

The annual hay cut took place in October. The beam in the play area has been repaired alongside the playground refurbishments in the Recreation Ground. Members agreed that Cllr Palamarczuk would investigate the possibility of a new bench and a tree to commemorate the Coronation earlier in the year, to be sited in the Meadow. However, Peter Massini has recently suggested that no further trees are required at the moment.

Environment Agency

Robertsbridge Flood Alleviation Scheme – the biannual deployment exercise took place on Tuesday 17th October, with all road gates temporarily closed (traffic lights in operation). This was pre Storm Ciaran and subsequent rainfall that lead to flooding on 2nd November and 4th/5th November. On Saturday 4th, the EA warned that the forecast rainfall could lead to very high river levels that could require deployment of the road gates (10.8m). However, with less rain than expected the water peaked in the early hours of Sunday 5th November (10.4m), and whilst 3 static pumps were in operation all day and night, and the EA were in attendance, the road gates were not needed. Fortunately, on this occasion the pavilion and toilets were not flooded. Sadly, the newly refurbished playground was under water – although you would not have known it two days later!

Karen has been in discussion with the Environment Agency about holding a community awareness day in Summer 2024 with displays, information and demonstrations, to explain our flood defence scheme, what is involved, how the EA monitor river levels etc., and what happens if the road gates are deployed (which of course impacts far more residents). The EA is keen to take part and we will be looking at dates in the new year.

ESCC Community Match Programme

On 13th November we were advised of changes to the Community Match programme to include an increased cap on ESCC contribution to schemes from £50K to £60K; setting a limit of £120K for costs for all schemes. Also, all applicants will receive feedback on the likelihood of any proposed scheme being suitable, to help guide whether a full feasibility study should be taken forward.

New guidance can be found on the East Sussex Highways Community Match webpage at <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/services/community-match>

Salehurst Cemetery

Activity - since the last meeting (18th September) - there has been one ashes interment, and two further arranged, pending dates (from families) and two more in progress. There has been one burial and one purchase of Exclusive Rights. Four 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 Members 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:

Karen – Rialtas (finance software) training on budget setting and earmarked reserves 20th Oct

Karen - RALC quarterly meeting 11 Oct

Roger - Southeastern Stakeholder Forum 13th November

Training/events booked:

Rother Winter readiness event Robertsbridge 21st November – Karen and Gill

RALC Annual Parish Conference 5th December - David and Karen

RDC Planning online training 12th December 5.30pm - Gill and David (all Members are welcome to attend).

Karen

Gill

Karen Ripley
Parish Clerk

Gill Colquhoun
Assistant Clerk