

EAST HOATHLY WITH HALLAND PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH MEETING 2007

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to the 112th Annual Parish Meeting. Since last year's meeting Marianne Randall, Jim Ridgway and Barry Bray have resigned from the Parish Council and Don McInnes, David Vaughan and Chris Young have been co-opted.

There will be no elections for a Parish Council on 3 May this year as only five candidates have put themselves forward; they are Susan Cole, Andrea Durnan, Jim Haddow, Don McInnes and myself and we are automatically elected. I am puzzled why more parishioners are not interested in becoming involved with their Parish Council either directly or as part of an interest group. Sir Michael Lyons has recently concluded his report on the future of Local Government and it appears there might be an enhanced role for Parish Councils but possibly only those where most of the councillors have been elected, so our community could miss out.

John Garvican continues to represent East Sussex County Council but Sylvia Tidy will not be seeking re-election in this ward so we must wait until 3 May to learn who will be representing Wealden District Council. Lindsay Wiggins has replaced Bettina Walker as school governor representative; Trina Hunt, book-keeper, and Victor Tidswell, Internal Auditor, support us on financial matters and Ann Newton is Parish Clerk. On behalf of the Parish Council I thank all the people mentioned. Over the course of the next month or so we will endeavour to co-opt more people on to the Parish Council.

SOME ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST PARISH MEETING

The Parish Plan

At the 2006 Parish Meeting I reported:

"The Parish Plan is currently being updated. The guiding principle for formulating the update will be Sustainability – social, economic and environmental. Wealden's arguments on sustainability grounds for 75 additional homes lack qualitative and quantitative evidence and fail to protect adequately the gems of habitat, flora and fauna that are so rare in a Low Weald village. The revised Parish Plan will develop objectives to protect, sustain and enhance our community."

The update is virtually complete and for some months has been published on the parish web site inviting comments. The decision about wider distribution of the plan has been deferred for the new Parish Council to decide. The Plan has developed into five portfolios. There is a new objective to "oppose any development on the land contained within the triangle formed by High St./South St./London Rd./A22." This of course includes the site in Church Marks Lane proposed for development. The sustained campaign to save this greenfield site continues and I would like to thank Fiona Dobbs for her unstinting effort and support. Fiona representing the Action Group and I working together have lobbied WDC councillors on the South Planning Committee, submitted appeals to the Government of South East England and to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Parish Council currently has an appeal being considered by the office of the Secretary of State for Communities.

The Children's' Play Area and the Sports Field.

Jim Haddow will cover both these topics when he reports later.

New Community Centre

A window for securing funding for a grant from the Big Lottery is open until the end of this month. Funding for Community buildings is unlikely to be available again until 2012. Given this imperative and the fact that there is potentially more funding available from the developer of the brownfield site the Parish Council is submitting a bid to the Big Lottery for funding for a Community Centre to replace the existing village hall and pavilion. To be located on the Playing Fields, the proposed new building will be just over half the size of the building proposed in 2000. It will mainly comprise a large hall for indoor sports, a smaller hall for meetings, a kitchen, toilet facilities, ample storage facilities and changing facilities for men and women. Special access will be provided for the school. The document for applying for funds is formidable but an independent advisor has told us that we have put forward a good case. We shall know by September whether the first stage application has been successful, if it is we have six months to put forward a fully detailed project. We need to raise some of the money for the scheme within the community and the Parish Council asks for your support, we need to be thinking about this now.

Parish Web Site (easthoathlywithhalland.org.uk)

We are looking at extending the web site to give more cover to clubs and societies and to include a Business Directory for local businesses.

Kissing Gates

The Parish Council has 5 "kissing gates" to replace climb-over stiles that are an obstacle to less mobile parishioners and parents with small children. Please let us know about any stiles that you think should be replaced with these gates.

Mervyn Barnes
April 2007