

## **EAST HOATHLY WITH HALLAND PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2006**

As the new Chairman of the Parish Council (since 27 March this year) it will be my privilege to preside over the 111th Annual Parish Meeting that will be held at 7.30pm on 8 May in the Village Hall, East Hoathly. All parishioners are invited to attend. Wine, tea and coffee will be served at the end of the meeting.

I am following the format of previous years and publishing my report in advance. At the meeting I shall elaborate on this report and invite questions.

### **THE TEAM**

The other members of the Parish Council are Jim Haddow (Vice Chair) Marianne Randall, Barry Bray, Susan Cole, Andrea Durnan, Jonathan Greaves and Jim Ridgway. County Councillor John Garvican represents ESCC, District Councillor Sylvia Tidy represents WDC and Bettina Walker is our School Governor Representative. Trina Hunt, bookkeeper, and Victor Tidswell, Internal Auditor, support us on financial matters and Ann Newton, the Parish Clerk is responsible for management and administration. Our thanks to them for all they do on our behalf. Our thanks also go to Tony Gosling who resigned as a Councillor earlier this year.

Sadly for us Marianne Randall has given notice that she will be leaving the Parish and resigned as Chairman in March this year. Marianne took over the Chair of an inexperienced council in 2004 (we were all new councillors from the previous election). Marianne has been the glue that has held us together. The team wants to thank her for the work she has done for the Parish over many years on the Council and in many other capacities. Marianne and Bob will be greatly missed but such is the legacy they leave they will only be out of sight, never out of mind.

The Parish Council should have nine members. We are currently one short, another has given notice and a third is on leave on compassionate grounds. The Parish Council meets ten times a year on a Monday evening. All Councillors are ex-officio members of the Planning Committee that meets on a Tuesday up to seventeen times a year. All meetings are open to the public. Some Councillors are nominated as members of other committees such as the Village Hall and the Sports Ground. Councillors might also be called upon to represent the Parish at seminars and other external events. Every Councillor is a portfolio holder of a section of the Parish Plan and is expected to spend time to achieve the objectives of their portfolio. There is a need for frequent communication and a significant amount of this is done by e-mail. If you are interested in becoming a councillor please get in touch with Ann.

### **SOME ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST PARISH MEETING**

Meetings were held with the various suppliers of utilities, electricity, water etc. to complain, where appropriate, about the inadequacies of the service and seek assurance that their infrastructure would be upgraded to meet the demands of the proposed additional houses.

A survey was commissioned to assess the asbestos problem in the sports pavilion. As a result brown asbestos has been removed from the toilets, damaged roof panels containing white asbestos have been sealed and the rainwater goods containing white asbestos have been replaced with plastic ones. An asbestos register has been set up.

Reports and tenders have been commissioned on the children's play area on the sports field. The Council has decided to consult with parents of children who use the play area before making a decision. If any parent is interested in helping with this project please contact Ann.

The fencing and signage to the Long Pond and the pond on the sports field have been carried out to comply with the requirements of our insurers.

Every household was sent a questionnaire concerning East Hoathly Village Hall and the Sports Pavilion. Your overwhelming response is to have a combined building built on the sports field.

Six “kissing gates” have been acquired to replace the climb-over stiles that prevent less mobile parishioners and parents with small children enjoying our rural Parish. You are invited to suggest possible locations for the new gates to Ann.

The Parish Council has set up a web site [easthoathlywithhalland.org.uk](http://easthoathlywithhalland.org.uk)

#### THE PARISH PLAN

The Parish Plan has been brigaded in to three portfolios each managed by a group of Councillors. The activities listed above are objectives of the Parish Plan. The portfolio generating most interest is Housing and Commercial that was expanded to include public buildings (the Village Hall and the Sports Pavilion).

Planning relating to the additional housing has been in a state of limbo for much of the year on account of the judicial review on Wealden’s non-statutory Local Plan; a plan that the Parish Council opposed on the grounds of being denied a public enquiry. That said, progress was made with Wealden planners whose draft plan was ratified by Wealden Councillors last December. The planners were persuaded to recommend changing the designation of the brownfield site (Chapman Smith, Decoy Developments and PB Fencing) from 100% commercial development to mixed use with only 25% B1 type commercial development. This meant more of the additional homes could be accommodated here thereby releasing the South Street greenfield site from development. The current situation provides for 45 homes on the brownfield site and 30 on the Church Marks Lane site. There will be a significant number of “small” and “affordable” homes at each location.

The latest proposals to comply with the directive from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister require Wealden to find space in the District for 8,000 new homes in the period 2006 to 2026.

The Parish Council is working to establish an iron ceiling on the number of new homes to be built in East Hoathly .To date no guarantees have been secured but the report by the planning officers that Wealden Councillors accepted as the basis of the latest Local Plan made statements about East Hoathly perhaps reaching its sustainable capacity with the proposed 75 additional dwellings.

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.

#### HALLAND BUS SHELTER

East Sussex County Council has refused to move the bus shelter near the roundabout closer to the bus stop. Repairing damage done by vandals to the bus shelter is a regular drain on finances. The Parish Council wants your views on whether we should continue to maintain this shelter or have it removed.

Please come along to the meeting to meet the Councillors and Chairmen of the Village Hall Committee and the War Memorial Sports Ground Committee and let us know your views.

Mervyn Barnes