

***ANNUAL REPORT
OF
MARESFIELD PARISH***

YEAR 2006-07

PREPARED FOR THE
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY 18TH MAY 2007

AT

MARESFIELD VILLAGE HALL

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PARISH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Quality Council status

Your Parish Council was awarded Quality Council status this last year. It follows the Clerk's efforts in 2005-06 to gain the Certificate in Local Council Administration, which is necessary for the council to become a QC council. The status is evidence that we have all appropriate procedures and standards in place – in identifying it as a highlight, it is right to say that this should be the norm, but it is not; ours is one of only c450 QC councils in the country, out of about 10,000 town and parish councils. It is, though, evidence of a long-term effort over the last four years to raise our standards to at least the benchmark, and to put your council in a position to work as effectively as it can. Given that a great deal of our work involves persuading others to do things (the county and district councils and the police being the main targets), this status is evidence to them of our commitment to high standards.

Communication

We have communicated with parishioners as well as we can without huge cost. We have a monthly column in each of the three village magazines, and produce a quarterly publication of our own, The Parish Matters, which is delivered to all houses in the parish. Particular thanks are extended to Di Miles who formats this newsletter for us. We have a website, and this has grown during the year, and will continue to do so – we are particularly grateful to Charlie Stevenson who has put a lot of effort into this.

Phone masts

We have had further success with the planning authority in supporting the views of parishioners who opposed the application to convert the mast in Maresfield to 3G, and to build a new mast behind Churchfields in Nutley. However, the success at Maresfield was overturned on appeal. How that will play out in future remains to be seen, particularly in the Nutley case where the site is close to the homes of many children, the pre-school playgroup and the primary school itself.

Roads policing

Having achieved success with Sussex Police in 2005-06 in persuading them to recognise that rural areas have their own special policing needs, and that these include excessive speeding, we have been disappointed not to see any evidence during the year of the policy's implementation. However, at the end of the year, Sussex Police have reported an enlargement of their Road Policing Unit, new shift patterns to put more police on the roads, and a new scheme enabling local police to carry out speeding work; our local district has taken up this possibility. Whilst there is no external evidence yet of this, equipment has been ordered, police are being trained, and we are told to expect to see the result in mid-summer. They also say that they are increasing their efforts to control motorbike racers, a particular scourge on A22 in the summer.

Other roads safety

The County Council has placed the first of a new type of interactive sign at the north end of Nutley High Street, just north of the school. It works as a 30mph reminder, as a school sign when the children are entering and leaving school, and as a warning of the crossing being used. We have pressed for such measures and are glad of this response. However, there is more to be done and we will continue to press for it.

Maresfield's traffic burden

Many drivers still wrongly believe that the old routes through the middle of Maresfield are quicker than using the bypass. During the year, a brave group of Carl Goossens, Debbie Lyne and Ken Ogden have worked on the task which has confounded several people

before them – to create a traffic management plan which is acceptable within the parish and to the Police and the County Council. We do now have a realistic plan (largely the creation of James Kennedy, to whom many thanks) which has a simple solution to the potential for a rat-run to be created along Millwood Lane and Underhill and Nursery Lane. It won't happen though unless developer finance can be provided.

S106 agreements

These are the agreements which the planning authority enters into with developers; in the case of roads issues, the work is led by the highways authority, ie the county council. Regrettably, the possibility of gaining developer finance is hopeless under present practice. The planned roads work for the waste site and for the proposed Park Farm development has been confined to the immediate vicinity; the review of the Grampian site at on A26 has been confined to Five Ash Down, as if the traffic from that large development, will vanish into thin air once it leaves Five Ash Down – a lot of it will, of course, travel through Maresfield to get westwards and along Crowborough Road to go north. We have pressed hard (as has Buxted PC) to get a more common sense approach applied, but we have failed so far.

Local Development Framework

We have finalised and submitted input for each of the villages, and also a policy paper on affordable housing; we hope that this will be carefully considered by the district council. We have been ahead of almost all parishes in carrying out the consultation which led to this and putting in our analysis and wishes.

Our schools

Whilst nothing to do with the parish council, it is right to record the continuing success of both the primary schools in the parish, particularly the good scores each had in the value added statistics; too complicated to describe here, but essentially a measure of the rate at which children's achievement is proceeding.

Councillors

During the year, Cllrs Sparrow and Stevenson resigned. Cllr Galley was elected and Cllrs Barlow and Handley co-opted. At the end of the year, Cllrs Cranfield, Handley, Hardy, Peter Tester, Ray Tester and Stephens did not standing for re-election. Peter Tester's experience and commitment as Vice-Chairman has been a real help. The outstanding service of Ray Tester since 1969, Chris Stephens also since 1969 but with a break, and of Guy Hardy since 1979 is an example to us all, and we should be very grateful.

Cllr William King

COUNCILLORS

FAIRWARP

Roger Street 713227
VACANCY
VACANCY

MARESFIELD

John Gutteridge 764781
Ken Ogden 761433
Val Taylor 763256
VACANCY
VACANCY

NUTLEY

Derek Barlow 713151
David Finch 712142
Roy Galley 712236
Peter Harris 713141
William King 713798
Charlie Stevenson 712823

COUNTY COUNCIL

Tony Reid 712242

DISTRICT COUNCIL

Norman Buck 733191 **M**
Ken Ogden 761433 **M**
Roy Galley 712236 **N**
Sylvia Martin 740547 **N**
Michael Hoy 01892 770166 **F**

F Fairwarp
M Maresfield
N Nutley

MARESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007

<u>2006</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>2007</u>
65390	Precept	76443
961	Interest	1007
74	Other	6633 Note 1
1219	Grants	0
67644	TOTAL	84083

<u>2006</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2007</u>
15185	Administration	14863
28822	Staff Costs	31537
5390	Services	9342 Note 2
729	Subscriptions	706
215	Grants – Section 137	340
11982	Grants - Specific Powers	6665 Note 3
5613	Projects	1325 Note 4
582	Capital Expenditure	1345 Note 5
0	Other	6570 Note 6
68517	TOTAL	72693

<u>2006</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>2007</u>
31665	Balance as at 1 April	30792
67644	Plus Income	84083
99309		114875
68517	Less Expenditure	72693
30792	CLOSING BALANCE	42182 Note 7

Note 1: Includes £6570 held on behalf of Easylink, and £63 miscellaneous income.

Note 2: Cost of The Parish Matters now included in Services, Fords Green Play Area essential maintenance, Parklands and Maresfield Recreation Ground Play Areas re-siting of equipment.

Note 3: Reduction in grants to Village Halls, Fairwarp Recreation Ground, Nutley Social Club and Fairwarp Play Area.

Note 4: Projects in respect of Youth, Roads and Traffic and Transport unachieved.

Note 5: This was a strategic amount held for traffic and transport initiatives and was used mainly on the Easylink Initiative and the new streetlight at Churchfields

Note 6: Payments on behalf of Easylink.

Note 7: Includes £6073 for ongoing 2006/7 contracts.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

During the financial year this committee, as it is required to do, has kept a watching brief on The Council's financial position. As with last year, on the advice of our auditors we have increased the reserves by £5000. The reserves are now at the recommended level (£30,000).

There has been some unplanned expenditure with which we have been able to cope. We had to stand the cost of the by-election in Nutley last year, which amounted to £1544, and also the legal costs in relation to Maresfield Recreation Ground (£554). We have however made some savings against budget on such items as insurance, telephones, stationery and photocopier.

The major expenditure for the Council, as with previous years, was staff salaries and National Insurance. This amounted to £31537.

We have also had to spend significant amounts at Maresfield on the Parklands' Play area. At Parklands this meant replacing some of the equipment and moving what was there to a refurbished play area in the Recreation Ground. There was also a requirement to carry out essential maintenance at Fords Green play area. Another significant expense reflected the need to carry out major tree works at School Hill, Maresfield. Some of these contracts are ongoing and will be completed in 2007/8.

Grants to local bodies were reduced this year. This reflects the completion of projects we had supported at Fairwarp Play Area and Fairwarp Recreation Ground. The grants to the three Village Halls were also reduced.

The Council has not fulfilled its intention to generate projects in respect of Youth, Transport and Roads/Traffic. The amount (£7000) set aside for these have mostly not been spent.

The two main capital items purchased during the year were a portable hearing loop (£400) and a laptop computer (£766).

We have negotiated new contracts of employment for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk the contents of which now reflect the demands of the model contract recommended by The National Association of Local Councils. These provide sickness benefits and access to The Local Government Pension Scheme, both of which were not catered for in the old contracts. These do have costs associated with them that have been included in next year's budget.

Next year the Council intends to spend £83,775 an increase of £130 (0.16%) over 2006/7. This will be funded through a Precept of £80,185 an increase of £3742 (4.8%) over 2006/7 supported by £3590 from reserves.

Cllr Roger Street, Chairman, F&A Committee

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The work of this Committee is very varied as it is concerned with maintaining and improving the 'fabric' of the Parish. A lot of work is on a day-to-day basis and handled by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. In addition Councillors on the Committee are supported by non-Councillor members, particularly in the area of Civil Protection and we have dedicated Radio Operators.

It is important to state that we are dependant to a great extent on other authorities and outside bodies for the resolution of many issues, for example East Sussex County Council's Highways Department. However, we have developed good working relations with these groups and are getting a satisfactory service in most cases, but there is room for improvement.

Special thanks must be expressed to Cllr Peter Tester and Cllr Ray Tester, who retire as Councillors this year, for their dedication and practical help and advice in getting many issues quickly resolved.

Additionally, special thanks must be expressed to Cllr Guy Hardy and Cllr Chris Stephens, who also retire as Councillors this year, for their sterling work on the Committee, particularly in their roles as Tree Wardens, which they have kindly offered to continue with.

For our play areas we have adopted a Play Area Provision Policy and set up inspection schedules to meet the highest standards required. At Parklands Play Area the large climbing apparatus has been replaced by a new balance challenge circuit, to address the concerns of some Parishioners adjoining this site regarding a loss of privacy. The New Parklands Residents Association should be commended for its positive and pro-active role in maximizing the opportunities for childrens enjoyment of this play area.

At Fords Green Play Area a lot of maintenance and repair has been carried out this year, including the painting and treating of all equipment and major repairs to the round-a-bout and see-saw to bring these still much loved items back into service.

At the Maresfield Recreation Ground Play Area, in addition to a lot of maintenance and repair being carried out, this facility has been upgraded by the installation of the climbing apparatus removed from the Parklands Play Area. The Maresfield Recreation Ground Committee deserves recognition for its hard work in managing the various activities that take place at this site. A large part of the site of the Bowls Club has been cleared and tidied and will allow some parking of vehicles.

Councillors are allocated footpaths annually to walk and report problems, but Parishioners are our main source of help in identifying work needed. This year we have had some fairly major works carried out and also installed additional markers. We have a good working relationship with the County Council's Rights of Way Team and are also ably assisted by the Ramblers Association. We are trying to encourage landowners to properly maintain the footpaths on their property for which they are responsible.

Throughout the year there were numerous faults and issues reported relating to roads and pavements and we are getting a good response from the County Council's Highways Team in fixing these. In the same vein, issues with trees and hedges are numerous and it is here in particular that Parishioners with property bordering roads and pavements are being encouraged to keep their trees and hedges well trimmed. In a few cases where property

owners have not taken action and pedestrians or motorists are badly affected, we have asked the County Council to step-in to help resolve the issue.

We have a number of the traditional wooden fingerposts in the Parish which we tried to get listed by English Heritage to give them special protection status. However the Secretary-of-State will not list them as they are not considered that special! The Parish Council will continue to maintain and repair the existing fingerposts, as they are not now supported by the County Council. The Committee is also responsible for the maintenance and repair of the streetlights in the Parish.

Cllr Guy Hardy and Cllr Chris Stephens, as our Tree Wardens, are conducting an audit of all Tree Preservation Orders served by the District Council in our Parish. This is no mean feat, as they are visiting the site of all trees listed, and they have agreed to see the project through to the end, despite retiring as Councillors.

Work is being carried out on the trees and hedges that border Maresfield Recreation Ground and School Hill to ensure the safety of users of the Recreation Ground and motorists. The hedge has already been cut back and the trees will be trimmed in July 2007.

Civil Protection falls under the remit of the Environment Committee and is slightly different in that we are preparing for something that hopefully will not happen. The Parish Council was one of the first councils to produce a comprehensive Emergency Plan and we have emergency kit boxes placed in each village 'just in case'. We work closely with the District Council on this subject and in the near future exercises are planned to test the systems in place. In the meantime our Radio Operators led by Mr Peter Easton (Nutley), Mr Tony Cottingham (Maresfield) and Mr David Endacott (Fairwarp) are doing a grand job in performing local radio testing and also testing with other Parishes on a regular basis.

This year we have become aware of increasing concerns from Parishioners regarding management of the Ashdown Forest, particularly that people living on or next to the Forest have little input to the Conservators. Along with the other Parish Councils affected, the Council is pushing hard to get greater representation on the Board of Governors.

We would like to particularly thank Peter Kirby, Toby Kirby and Ernie Wilson for working with us again this year.

Finally, just a reminder that we can all do our bit to maintain and enhance the Parish environment; this is a task in which the Parish Council needs your assistance.

Cllr Ken Ogden, Chairman, Environment Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE

This has been another very busy year for this Committee and we are grateful to our District Councillors who regularly attend these meetings.

This year the Committee has reviewed over 150 planning applications and it is good to report that only a small percentage of the recommendations made to the District Council have not been upheld. The District Council, as the Planning Authority, makes the final determination and the Parish Council is one of many bodies consulted as part of the decision making process.

A number of applications related to the building of 'granny flats' out of barns and upper floors of garages against a policy of not allowing the creation of new dwellings within a curtilage.

Planning Enforcement is an area where we have sought an improved service from the District Council. This relates to conditions placed on new developments and also breaches committed at existing properties.

Notable applications seen this year have included:-

- **Waste Site at Maresfield Army Camp** – Work is now underway by Veolia (ex Onyx Auroria) at this site to build a waste transfer facility and a public amenity site. Despite intense efforts by the Parish Council, the Maresfield Conservation Group and Parishioners the County Council's Planning Committee gave approval. We considered that the ESCC Officers reports were so flawed that a complaint of maladministration was lodged with the Local Government Ombudsman and you can read a full report on this from Cllr King in the Spring 2007 edition of 'The Parish Matters' newsletter
- **Mobile Telecommunications Maresfield** – Despite our objections, permission was given (on appeal) for T-Mobile to upgrade its facility in Nursery Lane to 3G technology
- **Mobile Telecommunications Nutley** – In September 2006, O2 applied to site a mast and equipment at Tyelands Farm, close to its borders with Bell Lane. Following a tidal wave of public objection, fully supported by the Committee, this application was withdrawn by the company. However earlier this year the application was resubmitted, with the Committee again giving a strong recommendation for refusal to the District Council due to the proposed site's proximity to houses, school, etc.; the overwhelming public perception of the health dangers from this mast; and that O2 had not demonstrated the need for a mast and that the Tyelands Farm site is the only option open to them. At the District Council's Planning Committee meeting on 1st May 2007 Councillors voted to refuse this application
- **Post Office Maresfield** – The future of the Maresfield Post Office came under threat when the premises at The Parade in Maresfield where it is housed went up for sale and an application was received for these commercial premises to be extended and to become residential. This situation is ongoing
- **Nutley Arms Public House** – After several applications in the last couple of years for accommodation schemes, approval was given for a new restaurant and Bed & Breakfast accommodation to be built onto the pub
- **The Old Police House Nutley** – After some revisions to the plans sought by the Committee, the project to build houses on this site is now in its final stages, and the Old Police House has now been demolished

- **Maresfield Park** – The District Council relaxed the single storey limitations it had previously placed on building new dwellings at the edge of Maresfield Park above Luccombe

We are awaiting the application from Persimmon Homes for the development of 80 homes at Park Farm in Maresfield. This is catered for in the District Council's Non-Statutory Local Plan and we have expended much effort trying (unsuccessfully so far) to get this development moved into the Local Development Framework (LDF) process so that a more planned approach can be made to the future development of Maresfield Village. A separate report on the LDF is in these papers.

The Committee is also concerned about larger developments at sites near to the Parish as these will have a direct impact on our infrastructure. We were a consultee for the application to build 750 dwellings at Downlands Farm, Uckfield which was refused. We have also been making input to proposals for the sites at the old Grampian Foods and Temple Grove School in Buxted Parish.

The Committee works closely with the village Conservation Groups, other local bodies, other councils and Parishioners in general to try to ensure that its recommendations to the District Council are not made without the views of those concerned being known.

Clerk, Tony Allen

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

What is the local Development Framework?

Wealden, like all local Councils, is obliged to produce an LDF setting out the Council's agreed vision for its people and infrastructure until 2026. This includes land use, where housing development will take place, where employment and business activity will be encouraged and the implications for transport.

Before final submission to the government in 2009, the Council must consult with many bodies such as the Health service, the Education authority, the water companies and others. There will be a long and detailed series of consultations with local people, including parish councils.

What are the next steps?

The LDF has to include a Core Strategy, which acts as a benchmark to test the various more detailed plans which follow. Preparation of that Core Strategy is now under way.

The Core Strategy, setting out the overall strategy and vision, will include items such as:-

- Will Housing Development be mainly in our towns?
- Should we discourage new housing in our villages?
- Where will the affordable housing be built?
- Should there be a completely new settlement?
- What changes do we need to our road and rail systems?
- What are the consequences in education and health?
- What should we do to preserve our countryside?
- Should we encourage more tourism?

Wealden Council are now producing an Issues paper which identifies the issues which will have to be taken into account in preparing the Core Strategy. This paper will form the basis of a 6 week consultation in June/July 2007.

What is the input from Maresfield Parish Council?

For each of our 3 villages we have consulted and then produced input for the LDF. Maresfield, Nutley and Fairwarp all wish to retain their distinctive rural nature and it is particularly important for Maresfield that it does not become part of Uckfield. Traffic volume and speed are of great concern in all villages, especially the impact of the A22 in Nutley and safety on the B2026 in Fairwarp. All are anxious about housing provision especially affordable housing for local young people. Maintaining current levels of service provision is essential; and there are specific local concerns for youth, sewerage in Nutley and Fairwarp, local policing and access to healthcare.

Many other detailed comments have been included.

What next locally?

Until we have the Issues paper, we cannot tell if it raises local issues or not. If it does, then we will set up village meetings as quickly as possible. We will give notice on the Parish Council website [www.MaresfieldParish.org.uk] and on parish notice boards.

Cllr Roy Galley

STRATEGY COMMITTEE

This Committee is the Council's largest Committee, having the most members, both Councillors and non-Councillors. Its purpose is to work towards implementing the Parish Plan which sets out Parishioners views on what needs to be done in the Parish.

The Council was one of the first to produce a Parish Plan back in 2002, and whilst it has been regularly reviewed by the Council, it is now time to seek further detailed input from Parishioners to ensure that the plan is still fit for purpose. Therefore views will be sought at the Annual Parish Assembly and at village fetes and via newsletters and magazines.

To assist with this review the Council will be participating in a research project being led and funded by the Carnegie UK Trust, as well as continuing to liaise with Action in Rural Sussex (AIRS).

Traffic

The biggest issue identified by Parishioners in the Parish Plan is the danger from traffic speeding and volume. This is also the 'hardest nut to crack'. Firstly, there are many different views about how these problems should be solved, and a Parish wide approach must be taken so that measures introduced in one village do not cause additional problems in another. We recognise the need to work closely with the various village groups.

Secondly, we have to work with the County Council as the Highways Authority, which has to assess, approve and implement any agreed measures. Thirdly, we have to get funding; the County Council has a limited budget, and measures needed to produce a significant impact are very costly and in reality may have to come from developer contributions as part of future developments in the Parish; a list of our requirements in this respect has been lodged with the County and District Councils.

Despite this, the Committee is taking a very positive and active approach to this matter. From consultations with Parishioners and village groups, we have developed an Integrated Parish Traffic Management Assessment, which sets out a coordinated approach for resolving the traffic issues in the Parish, and this document has been lodged with the County Council as our statement of what needs to be done.

From the Traffic Management Assessment, we have been able to identify some priorities for each Village which are being pursued. For Fairwarp the most urgent issue is the danger from speeding traffic on the B2026, particularly from the junction of The Street to Lampool Corner. For Nutley we are concentrating on reducing the danger from speeding traffic throughout the length of the Village, and are working closely with the Sussex Safety Camera Partnership; Nutley already 'qualifies' for a mobile speed camera, but we consider that to be insufficient. For Maresfield, the focus is on safety in School Hill, making sure that through traffic uses the by-pass, and stopping the 'rat running' through the lanes. To help move all of this forward we have a Traffic Working Party, and special thanks must be given to the non-Councillor members who have put in a great deal of work – Mrs Debbie Lyne, Mr Carl Goossens, and Mr Derek Thornton.

This is not to say that we have had no successes. We have managed to get some important new signs installed around the Parish, including a new state-of-the-art electronic sign for the Nutley School crossing. For 18 months we have pushed Sussex Police to implement a Speedwatch Scheme in the Parish, one that has some enforcement action behind it, and this will now be happening soon as we have been chosen for the pilot trial. We took part in the Ashdown Forest 'Slow Down – Give Space' campaign, where Speed

Indicator Devices (SID's) were operated in the Parish, along with measurements taken from road loops, and a special mention must be made of our team of volunteers who helped in this exercise. We have been successful in our bid for funding from the District Council's 'Town & Village Gateways Scheme', which will allow us to enhance traffic calming measures.

We have challenged Sussex Police and the County Council to take greater responsibility for reducing the dangers from traffic and to deal effectively with the crime of speeding and dangerous driving; we have asked them to work more closely together on this and to be more pro-active.

Health

We are determined to do everything we can to bring a GP surgery and other medical facilities back to the Parish. With inadequate public transport, Parishioners should not have to make a round trip of up to 12 miles to see a GP or practice nurse. There is clearly strong support for this as the petition we set up now has over 1,000 signatures on it; this was achieved through the determined efforts of Mr Fred Thorogood, one of our non-Councillor members, and he must be thanked for this and all of the other work he is doing related to health matters.

We are currently in discussions with the Ashdown Forest Health Centre (AFHC) regarding the provision of a GP surgery, but we have also made approaches to other GP practices in case AFHC is not willing to help. To move this matter forward has also involved a lot of correspondence and numerous meetings with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).

We also keep a watching brief on other health related issues that may affect Parishioners, and have been attending meetings and participating in consultations where required. We have kept a close watch on the availability of dental facilities and this is another facility that we feel could be brought back to the Parish.

This year we have also taken a closer look at the needs of the carers and the elderly in the Parish, and held meetings and obtained information to help these groups of people. We have been greatly aided by Cllr Hanno Fry who is the Chairman of the Wealden Senior Citizens Partnership. Thanks are also due to Ms Ceri Jenkins for her help in these matters as a non-Councillor member of the Committee.

Transport

Having led a consortium of Parishes to save the EasyLink bus service, a bookable door-to-door service for those less mobile, we were successful in obtaining a Community Grant from the District Council which still has two years of funding left to go; this grant will support the development of the EasyLink service and allow the setting up of a North Wealden Community Transport Partnership (NWCTP) to address the rural transport needs in the District.

Cllr Derek Barlow kindly stepped forward to take on the role of Project Manager for the setting up of the NWCTP. This is no mean task as there are numerous legal and practical considerations in setting up such an organisation from scratch.

We have completed a detailed Parish Transport Accessibility Audit, which clearly highlights the inadequacies in our Parish, and this has been lodged with the County Council and the Rural Transport Partnership and will be used as part of the next formal review of public transport in our area, due to be conducted in 2008.

We also keep a watching brief on other transport related issues that may affect Parishioners. Specifically, we have tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade the County Council and bus operators to divert a regular bus service through Fairwarp Village, and will continue to find ways to bring a much needed service to this village. In Nutley we are closely monitoring the performance of the 54 bus service. And here again we are trying to persuade the bus operator to give an improved and extended service.

Many thanks are due to Mrs Mollie Smith, another of our non-Councillor members, for the tremendous work she does for the Committee.

Youth

Led by Uckfield Youth Services, we have been able to run annual Youth Mobile Projects in Nutley and Maresfield, and are currently working on arranging a similar event for Fairwarp.

The 'Xtreme' Youth Group in Nutley is flourishing under the strong leadership of John and Stephanie Hacker, and currently the Church Hall is used for meetings of this group. The Committee is trying to find ways of providing a permanent base for this group in the Village.

We need to find ways of building on the momentum of the youth events that we have held. However, youth is an area where the Committee needs a lot of experienced help, and funding to bring about ongoing facilities and activities.

Affordable Housing

At the last count there were nearly 300 people registered on the District Council's housing list, who need a home in our Parish. The Committee is working with the District Council, local groups and Parishioners, to try to identify suitable sites for development to meet this need.

We have adopted an Affordable Housing policy and are keen to see some homes built in the Parish in the near future.

The Committee is also concerned with communications and the Local Development Framework (LDF), the new long-term development planning system. The Council's web site has been undergoing continuous development with Mr Charlie Stevenson at the helm as our Webmaster. With help from Parishioners, we would like to include more details of the activities of local groups on the web site, and also add more historical information about the Parish. We now publish a quarterly newsletter, 'The Parish Matters' and put articles in other village publications and the local press columns in The Courier newspaper. Additionally our notice boards display important information relating to the Council's activities.

For the LDF we have set up a Working Party so that we can keep up-to-speed with developments and consultations, and ensure that Parishioners are consulted at the appropriate times. A separate report on the LDF is in this Annual Report.

In summary, this Committee has a lot of varied and challenging objectives to achieve and the help from Parishioners is crucial to this effort.

Cllr Ken Ogden, Chairman, Strategy Committee

BONNERS CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bonnors have continued to go from strength to strength over the last year. In the face of falling rolls in other local schools, ours has maintained a steady position in the low nineties.

September 2006 saw us admit fifteen children, sufficient for us to operate a single age class for these children. Our class structure has therefore been Class 1 Foundation Stage, Class 2 Years 1/2, Class 3 Years 3/4 and Class 4 Years 5 and 6.

2006/2007 has also seen a lot of staff change. A new deputy head was appointed in September taking responsibility of our Year 1/2 children and at the same time we employed two temporary teachers to cover maternity leave for the job share partners in our youngest class. This combined with another teacher's illness in Year 3 and 4 has meant that induction of new staff has been a constant key priority. Staffing is now resolving itself with the return of the first of the maternity absences and appointment of permanent staff for our Year 3/4 children from September 2007.

In November 2006 we were inspected by both Ofsted and the Diocese as part of their on-going round of inspections. Both of these were successful and a confirmation of the judgements that the school had made under our own self evaluation processes. Both inspections were a very positive experience.

This year has also seen us being successful in achieving recognition for the work that we have done to develop sporting achievement in the school through the award of an Active Mark. We have also been recognised for the second time as being a Healthy School (this encompasses physical as well as emotional health issues) and have renewed our Silver Healthy Schools status. Both these awards join the Basic Skills Quality Award and School of Achievement Award that we already held.

Finally, as well as these more impersonal aspects, the school remains a vibrant, high achieving establishment with a delightful set of pupils, parents and staff. It is a place where I am proud to work.

Marion Ponting, Headteacher

FAIRWARP BABIES & TODDLERS GROUP

Every Monday 1.30-3.30 Term time only. Tel: 01825 712292 for more details

Fairwarp's Toddler Group is now in its seventh year. The group is friendly and fun for both mums/carers and children. It is small enough to have no cliques and traditional enough to encourage socialising! Children of all ages, with mums/carers of all ages, help make the group interesting, and it is a gentle opportunity to develop new friendships.

It has been really good to learn that some of the children who first joined the group back in 2000 are still friendly with their peers, who they first met at Toddler group, despite no longer having a regular place of contact with them. It reminds me that the reason for starting the group was to encourage friendships, especially amongst those people who are first time mums and are floundering a little in their new world! I remember discovering a whole new way of life and almost another community once I stopped going to work to raise my family and through the Toddler Group I have made many, many friends.

My third child will be going on to Primary School in September 2008, which seems a lifetime away at the moment but I know will just speed by, and it would be great if someone out there, perhaps just at the beginning of their years of motherhood, would like to take over the group at that time. In the meantime, anyone is welcome to join us, for all or part of the session. We look forward to seeing you there.

FAIRWARP W.I.

Fairwarp WI meets in the village hall on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Throughout the year we participate in a wide range of activities; speakers are invited to the regular monthly meetings, topics ranging from the spiritual qualities of the didgeridoo, demonstrations of Qi Gong and Tai Chi, to the history and tastings of "grog". A book of the month is discussed by the book club and a supper club meets at local venues.

The grandson of one of our founder members attended our 85th Birthday celebrations when we were entertained by an amazing magician. Our president was presented with a birthday certificate at the Federation Annual Council meeting in Hove.

Members helped at the Uckfield Housebound Club, ran a bookstall at the village fete and organised an Autumn Forest walk followed by a Ploughmans Lunch.

The highlight of the year must be the group's visit to the Prince of Wales's garden at Highgrove; the weather was warm and sunny, the guided tour was fascinating and the tea and biscuits at the end were of the highest quality.

Brenda Davies, Secretary

MARESFIELD CONSERVATION GROUP

In my report of last year I mentioned a number of issues which had dominated the activities of the Conservation Group, many of these are still with us.

Foremost is the Waste Transfer Facility and domestic Waste Facility on the former army camp site west of the village. Despite all the efforts of the Conservation Group and the Parish Council in opposing this development, physical work has now started on the site.

The County Council has consistently played down the likely impact of development in increasing traffic flows through the village, especially of private cars. From our local knowledge we believe this could be serious. Last autumn we commissioned the County Council to undertake a 24 hour radar traffic survey over a full seven day period to record speed and volume of traffic on the three main approach roads into the village (Straight Half Mile, School Hill and Batts Bridge Road). In addition we have obtained information on the County Council's traffic counts for the four roundabouts and road junctions around the village showing the volume and direction of traffic on particular days. From this information which we have shared with the Parish Council, we have been able to build up a picture of traffic flows through and around the village, which we can use to monitor any future increase in traffic as a result of the waste facility or other surrounding developments such as a future industrial area.

We are still waiting to see a detailed planning application for the proposed 80 home housing development on the Park Farm site. An earlier exhibition of the designs for this project showed it to be a tight cul-de-sac development with access off Field End. We have many reservations about this, but at least we have been able to secure a green area south of the church which we have been assured will remain a permanent feature of the village in any future plans. We are also determined that if and when this development goes ahead that the necessary traffic improvements within this village as specified in the Wealden Local Plan are fully implemented by the developers, and we will bring forward some proposals for this.

As to the wider picture Wealden District Council are still at an early stage of preparing the new form of Local Development Framework. We are expecting a consultation document on Issues and Options for comment in the early summer. It is unlikely that this will contain anything so specific as a development plan for Maresfield. However with future developments so uncertain it seems only sensible to put forward even at this stage a number of key objectives to be met under any future LDF plan. In other words we wish to be active participants and not just passive recipients. Last summer we circulated our own questionnaire to members on options and choices under the LDF, and this can give us a useful lead.

At the same time we have made progress on some of our smaller activities and projects. As a first stage to improve the existing footpath south of the village we have now installed two new "kissing gates" with the help of the County Council and our volunteer group. We will continue during the rest of the year to improve the route right down to the A26. Hopefully our colleagues on the other side of the A26 will now respond by improving the route to Uckfield. We have been very pleased to make a contribution to rebuilding the boundary wall round the cemetery on School Hill, and also to enhancing the equipment in the play areas, also to extending the floodlighting to the church.

We are currently marketing a range of cards and pictures and other memorabilia based on the work of the late Jack Keay by kind permission of Rita Keay. Finally please remember to visit our plant Stall at the Village Fete on May 28th, Bank Holiday Monday.

Dick Thompson. Chairman

THE FIELD END AND MAPLE CLOSE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

This is the first time that I have made a report on behalf of this group **FERA**.

The Associations members number 110 (10% of the population of the village) and has been an Association for 5yrs. The catalyst for forming the group was for a single issue to do with homes insurance which unfortunately was not resolved at that time but the pressure, I believe, has resulted in a new formula which has resulted in lower charges. However the Association continued and it has in the past enabled members to enjoy social events but mainly it is concerned in our environment and its maintenance.

All members pay an annual subscription and we do from time to time receive grants from Orbit Housing Association and the Chichester Diocesan H A. We spend our funds on grounds maintenance and would make donations to community projects that have an impact on the community. Every household pays a monthly fee of around £4.50 for maintenance of the communal areas and all front gardens have grass-cutting at least once every two weeks, as well as the maintenance of trees shrubs and hedging throughout the year. Out of our fundraising activity last autumn we planted 2000 daffodil bulbs and this spring an additional 10 flowering cherry trees were planted. The result this spring can only be described as “glorious”. Have a look next spring.

Field End and Maple Close is a good example where mixed dwellings work well with some rented accommodation, part ownership and freehold premises existing alongside, and in harmony with each other. Many residents here, in all age groups, are involved in village activity including, Brownies, football, Stoolball, and are members of the PTA and the Conservation Group. Three residents are founder members of the Millennium Players and two others are now regularly involved. Additionally some residents take an active part in the annual village fete.

The future development of Park Farm affects these residents the most profoundly and we have been involved very much in the consultation process and will continue to do so in an effort to influence the impact, that we shall undoubtedly feel, by any such development. We will work with the planners and the Conservation Group and the Parish Council and trust that the Parish Councillors who represent us will consider very carefully the impact that any development may in this area. We of course are not against the principal of building new homes, particularly affordable, rentable and shared ownership homes, that make it easier for both the younger and older generations alike, to remain close to family ties in the village and surrounding area. We also appreciate that market value homes have to built, to make it possible for this to happen. Without new builds of course we would not be here.

Michael V Wheeler, Chairman

MARESFIELD VILLAGE FOOTBALL CLUB

Maresfield Village Football Club is the biggest (Members wise) in the area running Five Senior teams on a Saturday, Ladies, Under 18s and Veterans on Sundays. Unfortunately with only one pitch at the recreation ground our Third Fourth and Fifth Teams have to play elsewhere. The most successful team this season has been the Third Team who won a Cup Final. All the teams are a mixture of youth and experience with the youngest player being only fifteen, and the oldest being fifty six. As a club we are always looking to improve the facilities at the recreation ground and in the pavilion.

We are always looking for new members, and especially anybody who would be willing to "run the line" for any of the teams, we are a very strong social club, and pride ourselves on our commitment to help young players wanting to play football.

Terry Gee, Secretary

MARESFIELD W.I.

The place to be on the second Tuesday of each month is in the Village Hall in Maresfield with members of our WI.

We have around 30 members, meeting once a month at 7.45pm with an interesting speaker for each meeting, ranging from subjects as varied as aromatherapy, tai chi, the story of Chartwell, car-making, The Air-Sea Rescue branch of the RAF and birds in Sussex.

We also have a lively programme of occasional outings and events. For instance, earlier this year members enjoyed a backstage tour of Glyndebourne and we are eagerly looking forward to seeing the musical "Hello Dolly" in April. We also have a team entered for a County WI organised Quiz. We have a stall each year at our local Village Fete and have run craft evenings and table-top sales in the village hall, and, when needed, cook and serve lunches to the house-bound at the Luxford Centre in Uckfield.

Maresfield WI runs a very popular Supper Club too. Members who wish to join in meet together once a month for a meal and a friendly get-together in one of several local pubs.

Altogether we are a very busy, friendly group of women of all ages, and we welcome any others who would like to join us.

Anne Seigne

NUTLEY CE SCHOOL

Another busy and successful year at Nutley School where we have seen the development of new teaching space, our new library and playground.

During the summer term we celebrated a lovely new library opened by Jane Hissey on a day so hot the playground tarmac melted, great SATs results achieved by our children and fabulous attainment throughout the school in many curriculum areas especially music and art. We were also delighted to be awarded a Gold Artsmark Award by the Arts Council for the second time and to receive a Silver Gilt in the National Britain in Bloom Competition. However, we also endured the tragic death of Tanja Smith when she was involved in a fatal accident on the A22. The courage shown by the children during this time and the support offered to the school by the whole community was tremendous and has helped us.

Returning from the summer break we knew OFSTED was imminent and sure enough we were visited during October. Our successful report highlights good teaching and exemplary behaviour as strengths of the school. We are especially pleased with the recognition given to improvements in the Foundation Stage, the good rate of progress that children make at Nutley, the quality of the personal development and well being of the children and the high quality of teaching that the children receive.

We are delighted that the report confirms our strong performance in English (our value-added is consistently in the top 25% of schools in the country), which due to the hard work invested in writing development over the last 3 years. Thanks must go to the children who spoke so positively about their school experience and also to so many parents for affirming their support for everything the school works hard to deliver.

The school was also inspected by the Diocese and once again this was a very positive report describing the school as 'a good church school that reflects its Christian ethos well'. It also highlighted the facts that 'pupils and adults feel valued and special and pupils feel safe and flourish in their learning by being well supported and encouraged.'

Other highlights included a fabulous celebration of a Tudor Christmas when the children enjoyed stories and activities followed by a banquet which included music, dancing and acting, back to school for bedtime stories to celebrate World Book Day, winning the local Football Tournament and Swimming Gala, wonderful art days for all classes and we are currently preparing for a mini-production of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat for our Music Concert (May 22nd 6.30pm) - everyone is invited!

As ever we continue to be in-debited to our fabulous teaching and support team and thank them for their dedication and commitment to the school. Grateful thanks also to the community, in particular for the support shown towards the school in the last year.

Amanda Gander-Miller
Head Teacher

Ray Kennedy
Chair of Governors

NUTLEY CONSERVATION GROUP

The full committee has met six times since the last report and the VDS sub-committee on seven occasions, as well as more informal contacts.

We have campaigned actively against the proposals to build seventeen bed and breakfast rooms at the Nutley Arms, against the Mobile Mast proposals and against the development of the Old Police House site. The Old Police House has now been demolished and a slightly lesser development approved. To date the Mobile Mast has not been approved but we are awaiting a decision from Wealden District Council. Permission was refused for the building of seventeen bedrooms at the Nutley Arms but a subsequent application to build twelve rooms on top of the 170 covers restaurant, for which consent had already been given, was successful. As we feared at the outset, having appreciated the value of the site, it is now up for sale, the owners are moving on and we can only hope that new owners will endeavour to preserve a pub for the village.

Finally, over Easter every household in the village received a copy of the Village Design Statement. We hope it will encourage sensitive planning and development in response to the village's needs, whilst enhancing the character of the village in the future.

Jock Compson, Chairman

NUTLEY TENNIS & SQUASH CLUB

The big news for the Club this year is that the tennis courts have been resurfaced and are playing wonderfully and look resplendent in their new two-tone green colours. The tennis scene has also benefited enormously from the recruitment of an enthusiastic and pro-active resident tennis coach, as a result of which the junior programme is growing in size and popularity. Matches continue to be played throughout the year and, now that the courts are resurfaced, the Club is going to hold a number of tournaments and social tennis afternoons.

The Club has also been extremely fortunate to have secured the services of a dedicated and hard-working squash coach, who has built up the mini squash programme and introduced new formats for the adult players. The Club is holding an Open Day on Sunday, June 3rd and is also going to publicise our newly resurfaced tennis courts in local papers in order to try and recruit new members.

In the last few years, a number of tasks have been completed which have all improved this valuable village facility, such as: new entrance door with swipe card access; complete 'makeover' and painting of the upstairs of the Clubhouse; removal of overhanging tree branches and cutting of hedge adjacent to tennis courts; new signs on the A22 and, of course, tennis court resurfacing together with new posts and nets. The small Club committee undertakes all the cleaning and care of the club on a voluntary basis including such things as changing the light bulbs in the squash courts and keeping the grounds of the club looking nice.

The Club is looking for funding to

- buy a banner to advertise the Open Day and to be used annually
- help with purchase of picnic tables
- help with the costs associated with repainting and retiling downstairs

With many thanks for your support

Lucy Tardrew, Club Secretary - www.nutleyracquets.co.uk

NUTLEY W.I.

At a time when many WI groups have closed or are struggling, it is good that Nutley WI is still going strong. We have 26 members, with several new and active members who have already made valuable contributions to our group.

One of our new members, Susan Edwarde, started off the year with a most interesting account of her life with the Met, which was followed by talks on the St Peter & St James Hospice and a Year of Nature at a Sussex Reservoir. In June the WI County Craft Collection was brought to us and in July we learned all about the Art Deco Ladies. August saw our members out on the Ashdown Forest cleaning up around the bench in memory of Lady Castle Stewart, followed by an excellent tea at Duddleswell. In September, Mr & Mrs Robin taught us how to appreciate cheeses, bringing many samples to try. In October, we went to Wapsbourne Farm to learn about gourds, though the afternoon was somewhat dampened by the appalling weather, and we were thankful to go into the beautiful house for tea and pumpkin cake. Our Christmas lunch at the Buxted Inn was as excellent as always.

We have been well represented at county meetings, including the Elizabethan Day at Herstmonceux, and took part in the more serious Resolutions meetings. We particularly enjoyed participating in the Group meetings, the outing to the royal Courts of Justice, and the Carol Service.

The Garden Group has had a difficult summer, with one visit cancelled because of bad weather and another by scorching heat. However, the last visit to Groombridge was much enjoyed.

The Craft group unveiled their rag-rug wall hanging, depicting a view of the Ashdown Forest, in the Church Hall, and have completed several knee-rugs and a blanket, which have been sent to Rwanda.

We have had fewer teas to cater this year, but have had the privilege of providing two funeral teas, which seemed much appreciated by the relatives.

Our contributions to our community have included a stand at Village Day and by giving the residents of Nutley Hall their much appreciated annual party, though we had to move to the Memorial Hall as their numbers have increased. In addition, we applied for, and received, a grant from Maresfield Parish Council towards the cost of renovating the notice board outside the Memorial Hall. Since this was given to the village by Maureen Knight, and inspiring member of our WI, in memory of her husband, we were pleased to do this.

In March we joined up with Maresfield WI to provide the refreshments for the Maresfield Parish Council Quality Council Presentation; a very pleasant occasion much enjoyed by all.

Jan Matthews, Secretary

ST JAMES THE LESS CHURCH

A very significant event of the year was the retirement of our Vicar, the Reverend Martin Greig, on grounds of ill health. We were pleased that Martin felt well enough to work part time with us until the end of June, and we are very grateful for his ministry with us, and for his cheerfulness during a difficult time for him. Martin and Anne are enjoying their retirement in Wales very much and Martin's health is remaining stable.

After Martin's retirement, preparations then began for appointing a successor. We were delighted when the Reverend Jon Hobbs was appointed, to start work with us and Maresfield Church from late April 2007. We welcome him and his wife Bethan and daughter Esme warmly into our village community. We feel the efforts of all during our period without a vicar have succeeded in keeping the Church in good heart ready for our new incumbent. Thanks to the kindness, flexibility and enthusiasm of many lay readers and clergy, no service has had to be cancelled due to a lack of leader to take it. We have enjoyed and much appreciated the variety of styles, presentation and theological viewpoint of those who have led services for us, and we have benefited from the different insights and teaching we have received.

Due to the generous legacy of Letty Gillett, specifically earmarked for work on the fabric of the church, we have been able to completely redecorate the interior of the building this year, and re-carpet it. This has helped to make the church feel much more welcoming. We also have one team that arranges the flowers, and another that works hard to keep the building clean; we would always welcome more people from the village community if they would like to help with these tasks, whether or not they are church members. Please let us know.

Over the past year, we feel the church community here has become more outward looking and more eager to engage with those around us. The successful Kids' Club and Teas on the Green in the summer, as well as the year round monthly Perspectives' Meetings and weekly Coffee Pop In, have grown in strength and numbers. Home Groups continue to prosper, and we are very grateful to their leaders. The Sunday Club and Pathfinder leaders continue to work enthusiastically amongst our young people, and the new Youth Club, Extreme, led by John Hacker and run with the support of the Parish Council, is proving successful. We appreciate the close links and support that Nutley School offers to us, too, especially in publicising and supporting the Easter and Advent Clubs, both of which ran successfully this year. A choir from the school sang in the Carols by Candlelight service, when the church was full to overflowing. The Crib Service and Christmas Day service were also well supported by local families as well as those visiting the area.

St James the Less aims to be a friendly and welcoming church, where people from different religious or non-religious backgrounds will feel comfortable, yet challenged.

We look forward optimistically to the future with our new Vicar, the Reverend Jon Hobbs, and feel confident that he will be able to count on the kind and generous support that you have given to us so willingly.

Sue Kennedy and Helen Compson, Churchwardens