

# The Parish Matters

Volume 1, Issue 7

NOVEMBER 2004

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## If a Job Needs Doing, Who Does it?

**William King**

"If you want to get something done, ask a busy person" is an old maxim. It underlines that it's people who get things done, not organisations.

While the Clerk was on holiday, I tried to keep the office going; opening the post, looking at e-mails, listening to and noting the phone messages. I even had a go at dealing with some of the things which would have waited for his return. He's a busy person. When I went in to organise the agendas for the next week's

committee meetings, collate all the papers and stuff envelopes to send

everything out, I was surprised to find that 29 people would be involved, including 15 non-councillors. So it's good news to know how many non-councillors are helping out with the community's affairs. One of them, Derek Barlow, has been chairing our Traffic & Transport Committee temporarily; and Bruce Morley has created a new Asset Register. We should all be grateful for this volunteer effort.

In the same vein, I'm pleased that this edition of Parish Matters includes pieces from Boners School, the New Parklands Residents Assn, Fairwarp's Play Area and the Ashdown Forest Garden Centre.

This should help many parishioners recognise how much is done in the community by so many different groups of people.

A new body in our midst is the Nutley Conservation Group. There are similar groups in Maresfield, and there was a predecessor group in Nutley. I hope this new group can be as successful as the Maresfield groups.

**"I was surprised to find that 29 people would be involved, including 15 non-councillors"**

**"We should have a great deal of community involvement..."**

There is a view that the county and district councils and the police have a duty to provide all the services within their powers. They don't; they have to trim what they do according to the resources available

to them. I was urged a while ago

### Better Villages with Your Help

**Youth.** In conjunction with Uckfield Youth Service we have had a small bus for the youth of Nutley on a Wednesday evening. It has been a 100% success for all those who used it. The younger people have identified longer term needs and the Council is now exploring these. For example, could anyone run a youth football team? Contact Parish Office.

**Older citizens.** The Council

by one parishioner to press for some local tidying up to be done. It's not something the county or district councils do, and they

could only do it if they have more money from central government or if we pay more Council Tax – and neither seems likely. Here is a case for local action, ie if the job needs doing, some local people could get together to do it.

Over the next few months, we will be working hard on the Local Development Framework. We should have a great deal of community involvement in the production of our parish input to this. I'll have written to a number of individuals asking them to get a group of friends together to think about this and to have their say. If asked, I hope you won't be too busy to say yes.

is anxious to ensure older people have the support and services they need. All relevant organisations are being contacted to advise the Council of individual requirements across the Parish but you can help by contacting the Parish Office direct if you know of a service that is needed within the Parish.

**Business.** There is a very significant number of businesses in our Parish. Some are well known and obvious but others are small or specialist. The

**SOME USEFUL INFORMATION**  
Maresfield Parish Office  
Churchfields, Nutley  
East Sussex TN22 3NA  
Tel: 01825 714555  
Fax: 01825 714614  
Parish Clerk  
Mr Tony Allen  
e-mail:  
Clerk@MaresfieldParish.org.uk

Council is keen to see if any additional service or support would be beneficial. For example, the Council is considering holding a local business forum meeting for anyone in business in the Parish to attend and discuss local business issues. Please contact the Parish Office if you would like to hear more.

## Affordable Housing in the Parish

Two consultation meetings have taken place recently regarding proposals for affordable housing in the Parish. At both meetings Parishioners were given the opportunity to discuss the plans with representatives from several different departments of Wealden District Council along with Parish and District Councillors who were also in attendance. Around 250 Parishioners attended a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> September at Fairwarp Village Hall to view the proposed plans for six affordable houses to be built in Old Forge Lane. Residents adjacent to the proposed site have formed the Old Forge Residents Committee to represent their views.

And nearly 100 Parishioners came along to Nutley Memorial Hall on

12<sup>th</sup> November to discuss plans to build ten houses adjacent to Hillmead. The newly formed Nutley Conservation Group is closely following this proposed development.



Useful comments were received, both for and against both these proposals. In general most people recognised the need for low cost affordable housing for those who cannot afford to buy in such an expensive area, to help retain young people in the Parish, and for those who work in the Parish or have had to move away in order to afford housing.

The Nutley proposal is part of the Housing Our People (HOPE)

scheme outlined in the Revised Draft Local Plan (RDLP).

There will be a Special Council meeting taking place at Bonners School on 8<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm for the Council to decide it's response to the whole of the RDLP. Members of the public are very welcome to attend this meeting.

There is much to be taken forward from these consultations, and as the Parish Council starts working towards the Local Development Framework and planning for the next 15 years or so, we must bear in mind the young people in our Parish who will be looking for housing at a later date to ensure the life in our villages is retained.

## Play Area Improvements in Fairwarp .....

The project to improve the play area on Fairwarp Village Green is proceeding apace. We have been fundraising now for two years; our fundraising target is £42,000 and to date we have raised just over £39,000.

Our most notable recent successes were a grant from a government initiative called Living Spaces, who, earlier in the year, awarded us £14,500. The aim of Living Spaces is to improve local spaces for the benefit of the community. For our purposes this grant contribute to the play area and also assist with improving the village green itself- funding an element of additional drainage to enable us all to use the green for more of the year- anyone who was at the Fairwarp fete after the rainstorm will have

seen how quickly the land gets boggy!! What we want to achieve is easier access to the play area all year round and for children to play on the green (rather than on the street) without getting covered in mud.

Our second large award was through Action for Rural Sussex (Local Network Fund), who has awarded us £7,000 to fund the equipment in the playground.

The vast remainder of the funds have come from local fundraising efforts and we continue to be very grateful for the support that the village has shown to our project.

Over time we have held three consultations; our most recent focussed on the

equipment that children and adults would like to see in the play area. We aim to hold a further meeting in the next few months which will be entitled 'a meeting of interested parties'.

This is largely intended to provide a forum to demonstrate the draft proposals and to chat with neighbours, parents and other interested parties, to raise questions, concerns and offer support for the project. It is intended to iron out any issues that people may have so that we can come up with final proposals.

In the meantime we are working to raise the final funds, to get up to date costings and to resolve some of the technical issues linked to the drainage.



## ..... and Parklands, Maresfield

After many years of organisation and deliberation The New Parklands Residents Association are proud to announce that the Play Area is now open. We had a grand opening ceremony with William King and other handing over the play area to the children of Parklands and surrounding estates. Sussex Police came with their cheque for £3,000, which was much appreciated, and members of the parish council attended. Residents came to help

us celebrate with a free BBQ, refreshments, bouncy castle and the local majorettes performed for everyone.

Many local organisations donated money, the Parish Council put forward £6,000, Action in Rural Sussex £7,000, Sussex Police £3,000, Village Fete Committee £300, Village Market Committee £50 and the Conservation Society £100. We are all extremely grateful for their generosity.

Over the next year more fundraising will be carried out to equip the site further. Already the park has been full of children enjoying themselves and let's hopes it carries on for many more years.

If anyone would like to place a donation please feel free to send it to: Mrs Toni Birkbeck, 91 Parklands, Maresfield.

## There's Trouble Ahead Roger Street

Without wishing to cause unnecessary anxiety, it must be said that in these troubled times we need to be prepared to respond appropriately to any major incident that may adversely affect our area. This does not only refer to the current threat of terrorism, but also major disasters generated by the natural environment or the failure of modern technology (i.e. extreme weather, air crashes, sustained power failures and so on).

Despite our appeal in the June issue for volunteers who may have something beneficial to offer in the

work of this committee there has been minimal response. We have the list of those of you who have volunteered to give practical assistance in a time of emergency together with the skills and resources

**"Despite our appeal in the June issue for volunteers .....there has been minimal response"**

that you possess and we thank you for it. But we also need people who can help in disaster management and contingency planning who can be involved with the committee on a more regular basis. If this is you, please get in touch via the Parish Office.

By the way if you missed sending back the questionnaire last year and you have appropriate equipment, facilities, or possess skills, or just want to help at the time of an emergency give the Parish Office a call.

## Working Hard Tony Allen

Maresfield Parish Council is one of the most active and hard working Councils in East Sussex. It has received much praise from East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council and is greatly respected by all of the key organisations involved in local government. This year, the Parish Council and its Committees will have held over 80 meetings – an all time record. In addition there are numerous external meetings to attend. Councillors and the Clerk are therefore kept very busy, not just with the meetings themselves, but with the preparation and follow-up work as well.

The Clerk, who is currently the only

employee of the Parish Council, will handle over 500 formal Action Points this year arising from the Parish Council and Committee meetings. This forms only part of the Clerks role, which also includes his 'day-to-day' work, and roles as Financial Officer and Legal Adviser to the Parish Council.

A lot of the Parish Council's work is 'behind the scenes', like determining future housing, planning and environmental development, prior to the involvement of Parishioners in later consultation stages. Despite this Councillors and the Clerk are committed to helping as much as they can with any immediate issues that Parishioners have."

## Council Support Roger Street

The extra work needed to achieve the status 'Quality Council' and our participation in determining the new 'Local Development Framework' is challenging. It will put severe pressure on the council members and the Parish Clerk.

The Clerk, Tony Allen, is currently our only paid employee. Already struggling under the weight of the demands of an ambitious council, it is obvious that he needs some additional help in order to cope. The workload was recently analysed and he was found voluntarily to be working 20% more hours than his conditions of employment demanded. This was just to keep up with what



**'A quiet Monday Morning!'**

is happening now.

The Council has decided, therefore, to create an additional part-time post to cover the shortfall. Recruitment will take place in the near future.

The Finance Committee is currently drawing together the budget for 2005/2006. Once it is finalised it will be placed before the full council for discussion and ratification. As with other years, the council has funds available to make grants to local projects, groups and organisations that actively benefit our community.

Many thanks to the many groups and organisations who have put bids in well in time for this exercise.

### MARESFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

#### FAIRWARP

**Guy Hardy** 712647  
**Steve Leaney** 712115  
**Chris Stephens** 712464  
**Roger Street** 713227

#### HORNEY COMMON

**William King** 713798  
**(Chairman)**  
**Ray Tester** 712519

#### MARESFIELD

**John Gutteridge** 764781  
**Ken Ogden** 761433  
**Sandra Weekes** 712691

#### NUTLEY

**Hanno Fry** 712410  
**Tim Sparrow** 713460  
**Peter Tester** 712117  
**Mairede Thomas thro'** 714555

## Traffic & Transport

**The enclosed consultation document gives YOU the chance to have YOUR say about traffic problems in the parish. Just take a few minutes to fill it in and YOU can help make a difference.**

### The Parish Matters

This newsletter is about YOUR Parish. Let us know what you think; what council matters you want to know about; what articles interest you most. Just call Tony Allen on 714555.

## Spotlight on Local Business



Located at the Ashdown Forest Garden Centre on the B2026 at Duddleswell, Greenfingers Café is a great example of business diversification within an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Purchased in 2000, the garden centre was successfully re-established as a thriving local concern concentrating on the traditional aspects of a garden centre. It was recognised that additional facilities were required to continue the ongoing development utilising the existing infrastructure of the garden centre and being in sympathy with the local area.

After discussion with many of the regular customers it was decided to convert the Dutch Barn into a café. Planning permission was applied for and granted.

The result - the barn conversion was carried out during the winter of 2003/4 and Greenfingers Café opened in January 2004.

The café fulfils a demand from the Garden Centre clientele and has also successfully drawn in new customers to the Garden Centre and visitors too the forest.

The key to Greenfingers success is providing top quality home cooked food, uniquely for a Garden Centre café it has an open kitchen where customers can see the food preparation and more importantly see and smell the superb cakes being baked.

Where ever possible fresh vegetables and herbs that are grown at the Garden Centre are used in food preparation.

In addition to the quality, fairly priced food menu Greenfingers stocks local jams, chutneys and honeys which have proved very popular.

Come and see for yourself, and enjoy a day out at the Garden Centre and relax with a freshly prepared lunch or tea and cake at Greenfingers Café.

Greenfingers is open throughout the winter and will be offering a new winter menu as well as Festive fare in December.

For more information please contact us on 01825 712233 or pay a visit to our new website:

[www.ashdownforestgardencentre.co.uk](http://www.ashdownforestgardencentre.co.uk)

## Is It Your Responsibility?

How many times have you walked or driven along a road and been faced with overgrown trees/hedges/shrubs which make it nearly impossible to see where you are going? It is very easy to grumble about these things but did you realise that the responsibility for these problems lays with the owner of the property, not the Parish Council. William King has highlighted the need for a lot more community involvement in many aspects of Parish Matters (*If a job needs doing, who does it?* On the front page.) But, did you realise that this involvement really does start at home. Check out your own boundary - could you tidy it up a bit more?

**"Let us all pull together and show what 'Community Spirit' is all about"**

Many times we hear people bemoaning the fact that the 'Dunkirk spirit' only ever comes out when a disaster happens. Remember how everyone pulled together during the hurricane of '87?

Our Parish is special, not only in terms of landscape and countryside, but we also have the joy of living in a very active, busy and friendly parish. Let us all pull together and really show what 'Community Spirit' is all about. Start by tidying up your boundary, trimming your hedges and cutting back overgrown trees. The reward may be that next time you drive along the road, you may be able to see where you are going and can really take pride in this beautiful area.

## Bonnars School Goes from Strength to Strength

Following recent years of success and high achievement, Bonners CE School has recently been congratulated by the Local Education Authority for its high levels of success.

Last year the school was one of the most improved schools in East Sussex, achieving test results at Key Stage 2 (Year 6) that far outstripped many of its statistical neighbouring schools. The LEA awarded particular praise to the amount of progress children had made whilst at the school, this again, far exceeding the average for all East Sussex. The school was also placed in one of the top categories of high performing schools following a comprehensive audit by the LEA conducted across the three terms of the last academic year. It was found not only to have excellent standards, but also high levels of care and support for its pupils. The friendly, caring and happy atmosphere enabling children to perform at their best.

Our final accolade was to be awarded a 'Healthy Schools Award' to recognise the work we had done in improving not only our pupils physical fitness and eating habits, but also in increasing their skills in dealing with areas such as sex and relationship education, drugs and alcohol abuse and bullying. This was a whole school community initiative and involved participation by parents, governors and outside agencies such as the health service.

It has been a highly successful period for Bonners and we are proud that our local village school is recognised not only by its parents and children, but also by outside agencies, the LEA, visitors and the wider community. We are what we state in our vision statement 'a caring school dedicated to achievement for all'.