



## **ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY**

**FRIDAY APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>**

**8 TO 9.30 PM**

**IN THE VILLAGE HALL**

You are cordially invited to attend the 2017 Parish Assembly. This annual event for the residents of Rodmell and Northease is less formal than a Parish Council meeting: it's intended to provide a round-up of the past year, and give you a chance to meet and talk to your Councillors and some guest speakers about current issues and what's likely to be happening over the coming year.

### **THIS YEAR'S SPEAKERS**

#### **Maria Caulfield MP**

Our **Keynote speaker** this year is our Lewes MP. Maria has recently spoken out about the rail situation, problems with the C7, the NHS, and rural issues such as post-Brexit agricultural policy and broadband provision. She's not intending to give a party political broadcast but wants to set out her vision of what's needed in our constituency – particularly in villages like ours – right now. We hope that whatever she says will result in a lively session of comments and discussion from the floor.

#### **Claire Farmer**

Less familiar perhaps to many Rodmell residents than the village primary school, **Northease Manor School** is an independent, residential, special school for pupils with specific learning difficulties, particularly autism. Claire, the new headteacher, is going to tell us about the school, make us aware of its future plans and let us know how she feels the school and the village can mutually support each other.

#### **Laurence Thomas**

The village hall is often at the heart of village life but running it can take a lot of work. Laurence is going to set out his stall and hopes to encourage some new volunteers to come forward to help market and manage the hall and what happens there.

## THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS

*... as ever, you win some, you lose some*

**Local Battles:** A complicated planning application lodged by Iford Estates, aimed at providing **commercial pheasant breeding and shooting** within the South Downs National Park and on the edges of our parish, was fiercely resisted by many in and around the village – and by your parish council. To the relief and possibly surprise of many of us it has been rejected by Lewes planners.

Sadly, another battle royal was lost. Staff, governors and parents fought hard against plans by ESCC and the Diocese to close **Rodmell Primary School**, but in spite of some success in the initial skirmishes, in the end the school itself had to admit defeat in the face of financial problems caused by a falling roll and the inability to find another school to partner with. The school will close at the end of the summer term 2018.

Though we are shortly to lose one school, we have avoided losing another. The survival of **Northeast Manor School** seemed doubtful a year ago, but the school now has a new and governing body and has recovered the support of East and West Sussex LAs.

A major success of the past year was the setting up of the **Rodmell Good Neighbour Scheme**, the brainchild of Judith Bradbury. After negotiating all sorts of bureaucratic hurdles the service was launched on 1st November 2016. After a quiet start, calls on its services have steadily grown. Judith writes: ‘we have helped out with collecting items, moving heavy objects, giving lifts, pet care, requests for general information and our most popular category – computers, including getting online, internet shopping, joining Facebook (often to

access Rodmell's Community Facebook Page).” Judith herself, Carolyn Orchard, Catriona Grant, Sandra Webb, Jean Twohig, Clare Gillies and Caroline Archer take it in turns to (wo)man the dedicated phone on a weekly basis, and a pool of 25 volunteers wait eagerly to help out with getting the tasks completed. The number to call for support is **07871 102076**. If anyone has lost their fridge magnet Judith has a few spares, and if you want to join the volunteers there will be a new recruiting drive soon.

Meanwhile in a combined initiative with the WI, GNS organised a **Basic Life Support Course** and was delighted that both classes of 12 were fully subscribed.

**Policing** was a major topic at last year’s Assembly. Guest speaker Rob Lovell, of the Lewes Neighbourhood Policing Team, reported that the provision of Police Community Support Officers to communities like ours was likely to change due to new funding constraints. From what he said you may have drawn the conclusion that in future we were unlikely in Rodmell to have more than an occasional and fleeting glimpse of a PCSO, and you would not have been far wrong. Let’s hope that reactive policing is still alive and well, because I think we can forget the pro-active approach.

**Local bus services are now reduced** to a minimum, with the failure to get the community 130 service restored, even on a reduced basis. We are encouraging greater use of the CTLA on-demand service, which is much cheaper than taxis, and our **Good Neighbour Scheme** can also help those needing help getting to the doctor or the shops.

## AND SO TO THE FUTURE...

Last year our Broadband guru, Jude Le Patourel, gave us hope about the eagerly anticipated provision of **fibre broadband** in the village. Though it hasn't actually happened yet, various vital bits of the infrastructure have now been put in place, and we have had strong (though unsubstantiated) indications that the job may be completed within the current "window". This should mean by the end of June.

The proposed *entente* between Rodmell and the village of **Le Bourg Dun** in Normandy remains *cordiale* but as yet unconsummated. Discussions have been slow, but Marcus Brown and his team are now booked to cross the Channel, hopefully to put the finishing touches to a lasting arrangement. This will probably on the basis of alternating yearly visits. It is hoped that we can do this using informal but organised hospitality and trips which will lead to friendships between our respective villagers.

The **Rodmell Horticultural Society** is all set for its Spring Show on April 1<sup>st</sup> and Summer Show on 19<sup>th</sup> August. There will be photographic competitions at both. The weather gods were unkind to last summer's show – possibly punishing us for not having one the previous year – but Chairman Willie Edmonds assures us he has arranged glorious sunshine for the August date, which will be specially featuring dahlias with the new Peter Wilson Dahlia Cup.

Contacts: **Willie Edmonds**, 01273 474555, and **Candy Thomas**, 01273 473341, (horticultural show), and **Sandra Webb**, 01273 471898, stalls and games.

And a loss, hopefully only temporary: last year's **Art Wave** was a big success, benefiting greatly from being able to use Jude and Eleanor Le Patourel's beautiful house, the Old Rectory. This year, alas, suitable venues can't be found at the right time, and the organisers have decided that the event will take a year off.

**The Rodmell Notice Board Group** on Facebook, run by Nicky Terry, is two years old and has 244 members. It shows lots of useful information including warnings about road closures, accidents, weather problems, lost pussy-cats and recommendations for tradesmen, and it can also be used for selling items and advertising your business to the village.

It would be lovely to see more members. In order to join you do need to set up a Facebook account but this doesn't mean you have to be an active Facebook user. The only information you have to give is your first and last name, email address, birthdate and gender. Then when you have set up your account you can decide in the Privacy settings who can see your information or contact you. You don't even have to add any friends if you don't want to. If you want help setting up an account, why not contact the Rodmell Good Neighbour Scheme and they can send you a guru?

The **Village Website**, [www.rodsmell.net](http://www.rodsmell.net), run by John Gillies, complements the Facebook group. Where the latter provides rapid-fire, real-time news, we are trying to make the website a more permanent record of village life. In its new form it's alive and well, though not progressing as fast as we would like. John says: "we're getting a more varied photographic content and more material, but the site suffers from a lack of two things: money and helpers. Currently it's mostly done by me, with some photographic assistance from Caroline Archer, but the Parish Council can't afford to pay to make it look more attractive and work better. A sponsor would be great, but more realistically I'd settle for some regular contributors to provide materials about every aspect of Rodmell past and present: its history, geography, wildlife, and so on. All contributions will be very gratefully received, though not paid for! Send me an email if you have anything to offer or suggest, to [jg@gillies.biz](mailto:jg@gillies.biz)"



## RESIDENT OF THE YEAR

The Rodmell Honours Committee, chaired as ever by Christine Isitt, is more secretive than the papal conclave and totally uninfluenced by the Parish Council. It is currently locked in deliberations to decide who is to be this year's recipient of the prestigious "Rodmell Resident of the Year" title, more sought-after locally than any life peerage. White smoke should shortly be seen over Upper Rodmell, but the news will be strictly embargoed until the Assembly. Could it be you? You'll have to come and see.

## YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

**John Gillies** (*Chairman, broadband, website*)

**John Harvey** (*Vice-Chair, planning, wildlife, tree warden*)

**George Hickey** (*Rodmell school, C7, Northease*)

**Jill Goldman** (*RPC rep. on village hall committee, legal matters*)

**Richard Sellick** (*Sports field management, mowing, hedge trimming*)

**David Smart** (*Sports field management; agriculture*)

**Anne Sword-Daniels** (*Legal matters, highways, broadband*)

**Derek Blackhall** (*Parish Clerk*)

*From your Chairman*

I'm coming to the end of my second year as Chairman of the Parish Council, and while I feel I now know a bit more about my job, what I mainly know is that I couldn't do it without the support of the rest of the Council, and of a great many other people outside it. My thanks – and actually the thanks of the whole village – are due to those who have helped maintain and improve the quality of life here over the past year, as many of them have been doing over many years. To name but a few, Judith Bradbury for creating the Good Neighbour scheme, organising the Coffee Club, exercise classes and any number of other things, Martin and Pauline Burnaby-Davies for looking after the Pavilion, Marcus Brown, who finds time to mow the Dicklands as well as making sure the Church is Rodmell's spiritual centre, John and Lucie Cleall, whose Abergavenny Arms is its social focus, and Mike Twohig and his Village Hall team who provide us with a welcoming meeting place. There are plenty of others, unsung but not unappreciated, who help out with this and that; together all that they do helps ensure that our village richly deserves the accolade that a recent newcomer awarded it on Facebook:

*"We keep pinching ourselves to have arrived in such a lovely village".*

John Gillies, [jg@gillies.biz](mailto:jg@gillies.biz)