

SEDLSCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES RE SPORTSFIELD PAVILION

See notes of meeting held on 03/04/07.

1. THE SEDLSCOMBE SPORTS ASSOCIATION. The Sports Association is a voluntary organisation made up of local sports clubs. Football, Junior Football, Stoolball (ladies and mixed), Cricket and Archery are played at the Sportsfield.

2. SEDLSCOMBE SPORTSFIELD. The freehold of the 8 acre field belongs to the Parish Council the field is leased to the Sports Association by the Council for 30 years from August 2005.

3. THE PAVILION. The pavilion is a dilapidated wooden building erected in the early 1960s at the Sportsfield. It has now reached the end of its useful life and no longer meets the requirements of the Football League. The senior Football Club has been told it will not be able to play in the League next season if facilities at the pavilion are not improved. Improvement is not an option. The Sports Association has been trying for many years to replace the pavilion. Unfortunately because of a lack of expertise, a lack of funding, changes to other's plans and changes in officers of the committee, no satisfactory outcome has been obtained.

4. REQUEST FROM SPORTS ASSOCIATION TO PARISH COUNCIL. In order to help the Sports Association, a Working Group including parish councillors was set up a year ago and several meetings have been held. However, at the meeting on 3 April 2007, the Sports Association members were in despair because of their inability to reach a favourable outcome with the Football Foundation owing to frequent changes in officers and requirements. The Association feared that money previously available to aid local sport would be diverted towards paying for the 2012 Olympics. The replacement of the pavilion is urgent because of the Football League's requirements and parish councillors on the Working Group suggested the only reasonable option available might be to obtain a Parish Council Loan so that the pavilion can be replaced urgently. This suggestion was considered by the Sports Association and a letter dated 17/04/07 was received from the Secretary of Sports Association. It stated that the Sports Association is getting nowhere with obtaining funding from the Football Foundation and it believes that replacing the pavilion is the Parish Council's responsibility and should be financed from a Parish Council loan.

5. SPORTS ASSOCIATION PROGRESS WITH THE FOOTBALL FOUNDATION. Despite working with the Football Foundation for many months, the Sports Association has not yet submitted an application. A Business Plan was required and has not been drawn up. A Junior Football Development Plan has been drawn up. After submission, it takes 30 weeks to obtain results of over £20,000 applications.

6. QUOTES. The Sports Association had previously gone out to tender and copies of three of their quotes for a replacement pavilion and a quote for a slab have now been obtained from Andrew Gerken at Pumphouse Designs, Sedlescombe.

7. ROTHER LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (LSP) 2004-2009. A target for sport and physical activity is detailed in the LSP as: 1) To increase the number of activities for children, young people

and other target groups by 10% over next 5 years and to develop sustainable events for older people. It is suggested that this project meets the requirements of the LSP.

8. EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL. East Sussex County Council has "Children and Young People" as one of its target areas in its plans.

9. SEDLESCOMBE PARISH PLAN. The Plan was drawn up in 2002 and one of its main aims is to maintain and improve Sedlescombe's public amenities. At the time of the Plan, a survey found that more than a third of Sedlescombe's residents take part in sporting activities. A Sports Development Plan has been drafted. The most successful Sedlescombe sports club is the Sedlescombe Rangers Junior Football Club with 160 young members. Teams range from 6 to 14-year olds. There are 20 6-year-olds playing with a waiting list. Each team has a qualified coach. In 2005, the Club became a FA Charter Standard Club – the first small village club to attain the standard. Teams play in 3 different leagues and several teams have had considerable success. The Club has good links with the local village primary school. In 2007, the first girls' team was started.

10. PARISH COUNCIL WORK TO DATE.

1. Cllr Rand to ask the three contractors to return so that their quotes can be re-appraised.
2. Planning approval has been obtained but Cllr Rand to visit Rother Planning to check on the position of the current approvals.

11. BORROWING APPROVAL If SPC decides to obtain a loan to carry out the work, borrowing approval will need to be obtained through the National Association of Local Councils from the Secretary of State. Borrowing approval is required even if an interest-free loan is obtained.

The borrowing approval application must be accompanied by a report which has been accepted by the Parish Council detailing how the loan will be repaid etc.

If the applicant is successful, processing of the borrowing approval should generally take about 14 days from the date of its receipt by Department of Culture and Local Government. The borrowing approval will authorise the Council to take out a loan within a period of six months starting with the date of issue of the borrowing approval, or, if the borrowing approval is issued in the second half of the financial year, within the period which begins on the date of issue and ends on the last day of the financial year.

In practice, borrowing is likely to be from the Public Works Loan Board or the clearing banks, although loans may also be taken out from individuals or private or voluntary sector organisations.

Balances may have to be used.

12. BORROWING. A decision to borrow (a separate decision from the decision to apply for borrowing approval) must be made by the full Council (2003 Act, Schedule 1, paragraph 2(4)).

13. LIFE OF THE LOAN. The Council will need to consider how long the loan repayment period should be. Fifty years is the maximum. Generally the borrowing period should not exceed the life of the asset.

14. SPORTS ASSOCIATION CONTRIBUTION. Since the new lease was negotiated in 2005, the Sports Association pays a £1/year rent for use of the field but is responsible for all lettings and maintenance. This excludes the car park which remains the responsibility of the Parish Council. The Parish Council is also responsible for contributing towards maintenance of the access road in association with the Pestalozzi International Village Trust. The Council will need to consider how much the Sports Association will be expected to contribute towards loan repayments.

15. OTHER GRANT AID. Apart from a £5,000 community grant from Rother, grant aid does not appear to be available for this purpose, apart from the Football Foundation. All grant applications take a long time to process.

16. 2007 ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PARISH MEETING OF SEDLESCOMBE. The subject of the proposal that the Parish Council obtains a loan, costing about an extra £15/year for a Band D Council Taxpayer, was raised at the recent Assembly. The meeting was attended by over one hundred people and there was a vote in favour of the Parish Council investigating the matter further.

17. FUNDING

Estimated cost of building a slab and constructing a wooden pavilion	£150,000
VAT	<u>£26,250</u>
TOTAL	<u>£176,250</u>

The Parish Council has £18,000 to donate and the Sports Association has carried out fundraising. Hopefully, £26,250 could be obtained so that a loan of £150,000 would be required.

18. PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD LOANS

Fixed rate loans are only available for loans with a maximum repayment period of no more than ten years.

As an example of repayments:

A loan of £150,000, repayable over 25 years would create

- At 5.15% interest, a half-yearly repayment cost of £5,368.27 (fixed half-yearly payments to include principal and interest) ie £10737 p.a. or
- At 5.20% interest, an initial half-yearly cost of £6,900 reducing by £78 each half year (equal half-yearly instalments of principal together with interest on the remaining outstanding balance)

19. EFFECT ON THE SEDLESCOMBE COUNCIL TAX. Based on the 2007-8 figures, Sedlescombe's Parish Council Tax is at number 16 out of a total of 32 parishes in the Rother District, ie exactly midway. The amount is £41.90 and the precept is £28,270. There are 675 households in Sedlescombe. The two other quality councils in Rother are Rye (3rd highest) and Crowhurst (14th highest). The highest of any of the parish councils is Etchingham with a Band D Council Tax of £77.38 and the lowest is Rye Foreign with £6.52.

If the precept were to be increased by £11,000p.a. in order to service a £150,000 loan, it would increase the precept to £39,270 and would cost a Band D Council Taxpayer £58.17, bringing the Council Tax to number five on the current list, between Battle and Camber.

20. RISKS. The greatest risk is increased interest rates which will push up the amount of precept required. Historically, interest rates have reached over 15% (at the time Sedlescombe Parish Council last took out a loan in order to purchase the sportsfield).

Another risk is that interest in sport in Sedlescombe will fade away over the next 25 years leaving the Parish Council paying for a “white elephant”. The pavilion could, however, in this situation, be used for other community purposes.

P Raymond

Clerk/RFO, Sedlescombe Parish Council

8 May 2007