

REPORT AT 2009 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Financially, 2008-9 would have been a fairly ordinary year, if it had not been for one thing that has been on the agenda for years, the re-building of the sports pavilion. I like anniversaries, and the building of the pavilion is, I believe, a fitting way of celebrating the Parish Council's 25th anniversary of owning the sportsfield bought from Pestalozzi in 1984 with the help of a bank loan and the proceeds from the sale of allotments which used to be where Park Shaw now is.

We, well especially me as the Council's Finance Officer, lost a fair amount of sleep worrying about finding the money to pay for the pavilion project. The bigger grants did not materialise despite much work, apart from an excellent £35,000 from Rother District Council whose new grant scheme came in just in time for us.

Having said that the Big Lottery, Foundation for Sport and the Arts and the Football Foundation did not come up with any grants, lots of smaller grant applications were successful such as from the Mrs A Lacy-Tate Trust, the Isabel Blackman Foundation, The Yoga School, SB Focus Ltd., Battle Partnership, LWA Bodyshop, Sussex County Playing Fields Association, the Local Action Plan Consortium, Sedlescombe Societies Association and various individuals. A sizeable donation was also made by the Sports Association.

Probably most of you will have made some voluntary donation to the project through one or more of the special events organised by Judy and David Torrance, Ralph Dellow, Grant Burberry, Bob Harris and Paul White such as the Golf Day which raised £1800 or the garden walkabout £627 or the fashion show £650 or the more recent dinner at the Brickwall which together with the auction etc. raised more than a magnificent £3000. This small fund-raising group raised themselves or from others about £22,000.

This time last year, we estimated that the total project, including planning, architectural services, temporary accommodation, demolition, piling and construction works would cost

£180,000. We are pleased to say that we have finished the project within budget and on time thanks to the considerable input of many people, not least the builders Steed Construction Ltd. and the Project Manager, Anthony Rand. Everyone involved deserves a hearty pat on the back.

Obtaining a loan to make up the shortfall was fairly painless but, of course, the parish is now committed to paying off the loan over the next fifteen years at the rate of £4,643.24 each year or £7 a year for each Band D Sedlescombe Council Taxpayer. Despite the additional tax burden, the 2009-10 Council Tax set by Sedlescombe Parish Council brings us to a position exactly halfway down the list at number 16 in comparison to the other 31 Rother parishes.

On the Parish Council's table, we have a few photos of the new and old pavilions and some of the clubs that have made use of the sportsfield over the last hundred years long before we owned the field. One of the photos is from the WI Scrapbook showing the Sedlescombe Gymkhana. I've included this because we have also dug out two silver cups that were awarded at the Sedlescombe & District Horse Show between 1956 and 1969. The Parish Council has been wondering what should be done with these cups. What do you think? Their scrap value is about £60 or should they be kept for historical purposes? Does anyone have any more information or photos about the Horse Shows or know any of the people or horses named on the cups?

There are also a few photos of the Pumphouse and pump on the Village Green. The Council asked last year what residents would like done about the pump. Should it be refurbished? The Council would like to refurbish it if there is enough support and we have made the first steps towards applying for a Heritage Lottery Grant. This is a long and onerous business where we must involve the community. Does anyone have photos of water pumps, either this one or any other in the parish or information about their use? The one on the Green closed down almost exactly 50 years ago. Questions on the accounts?