

Whatlington News

JUNE 2023

CONTACT: STEVE TURNER 01424 870041

SAVED!

Surge in candidates wins reprieve for village council and sparks first parish election in 20 years

Whatlington Parish Council was less than a week away from folding until six residents volunteered to stand as councillors.

The reprieve was achieved when Rother District Council called a second parish election after only one person, long-standing chairman Roger Fisher, stood for the first poll in May.

An appeal to villagers issued in a special online issue of the Whatlington News, and some behind-the-scenes lobbying, means that with six candidates vying for four places on the council the parish will see its first election in more than 20 years.

Recent elections have been uncontested as the small number of nominations has meant a poll was not needed.

Residents will go to the polls on 29 June to elect a new council – a vital voice on matters such as planning, road safety and rights of way, as well as supporting village organisations.

Roger said the response of villagers was “a reflection of a vibrant and active community, which I believe we have”.

If the council had failed to attract new members there was a real danger its responsibilities would be taken over by a neighbouring parish such as Sedlescombe or Mountfield.

■ *Find out who's standing: page 3*

June
29
Whatlington Parish Council Election

See page 3 for how to make sure you have a vote

Together in Whatlington



INSIDE

See the website for our full menus


CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT
29 June
See page 4

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THE CANDIDATES

Candidate nominations received by Rother District Council on Friday 2 June are:

Ben Clarkson

Amanda Davis

Nicola Evans

Martyn Hole

Sandie Sullivan

Simon White

These six will be up for election for the four remaining places on the parish council, with chairman Roger Fisher already in place by being the only candidate at the original May election.

Let's have a good turnout at the polls

Parish Council chairman Roger Fisher said: "I trust there will be a large turnout for this important local poll.

"For the next four years, those elected will be providing a positive contribution to parish issues and I look forward to working with them in continuing to fight for what's important to the parish.

"Whoever is not elected will, hopefully, stand again in 2027. This would be a further demonstration not only of democracy in action, but also a reflection of a vibrant and active community, which I believe we have.

"Something of a new dawn now which, I hope, will be the foundation for an active council for years to come."

Make sure of your vote

■ The election will take place on 29 June, with voting at the Village Hall from 7am to 10pm.

■ You must take photo id such as a driver's licence or passport. If you don't have one of these documents and want to vote, you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate by 21 June.

■ Applications for a postal vote must be made by 14 June.

■ Applications for a proxy vote – getting somebody to vote on your behalf – must be made by 21 June.

■ More details on how to make sure you can vote can be found by contacting the Electoral Registration Officer at Town Hall, Bexhill TN39 3JX or online at www.rother.gov.uk and search for Elections and voting/Current and Forthcoming Elections and Referendums.

Candidate profiles and poll result

A special online edition of the Whatlington News will be published ahead of polling day with information about each of the candidates. And you can get an email alert about the result as soon as it is announced. If are not on the News email list and would like to join contact: steveturner807@gmail.com

A21 safety meeting delayed

A planned public meeting to discuss the next stage of safety improvements to the A21 has been delayed.

Highways Authority officials heard the concerns of villagers at a packed Village Hall meeting in April.

They were aiming to come back to the village this month to outline their proposals.

But their focus has been on other areas and so the postponed meeting is now more likely to take place in August.

In the meantime a 'conflict study' of traffic issues at the junction of the A21 and Whatlington Road is to be carried out, as well as a feasibility study on the installation of pavements along the A21.

Speedwatch in Euro campaign

Whatlington played its part in a European-wide initiative to cut the death toll caused by road accidents.

The village Speedwatch group carried out three roadside sessions in one week as part of Project Edward. Run by TISPOL – the European traffic police network – its aim is to achieve a European Day Without A Road Death.

The focus for the Whatlington group was the A21 with an average of more than 1,100 vehicles passing through the checkpoint during each hour at different times of the day.

Twenty-eight speeding motorists were recorded during the week at an average speed of 51mph.

QUIZ NIGHT

The Royal Oak Thurs 29 June, 7pm

All proceeds in aid of

**Tickets £3 per person or
£10 for a table of four**

**Tickets and further information:
Jane on 07802 315 962 or
janehendley1@hotmail.com**

THE BRAIN TUMOUR CHARITY

BAKED

Together in
Whatlington



Would you be interested in a line dance session in the village? A line dance caller can come to Whatlington and lead us in some dance fun for about an hour in early September. The cost would be minimal but we need to get an idea of the likely interest.

**Text or call
Anne on
07771994389.**

There is no obligation at all at this stage.



The annual Village Fete will take place on 26 August – the bank holiday weekend.

**Coffee
Morning
Wednesday
21 June
10am-12noon**

Whatlington Church

An opportunity to meet and make friends in the peaceful surroundings of the oldest building in the village, where locals have been coming together for more than 750 years.

If the event proves popular it is hoped to make it a regular occurrence. If a weekday is not ideal for you, get in touch and other possibilities will be considered.

The Village Hall car park will be open and parking closer to the church is available on request – email whatlingtonparishchurch@gmail.com or call 07446 903239

Boules is back – why not give it a try?

The village boules team is back in action with weekly matches against neighbouring pubs.

Its home rink is at the Royal Oak and the four-person team plays home and away against sides such as The Cross Inn at Staplecross, The Plough in Hastings and The White Dog at Ewhurst.

The team, led by Steve Palmer of Whatlington Road, has won two of its three matches so far in a local league of eight sides.

Each match consists of four singles and a team game, and the Oak side has achieved success in the past, regularly finishing in the top three.

Steve is on the lookout for another couple of players to ease the headache of having to find substitutes if one of the regulars drops out.

If you'd like to have a go at boules there is a free set available at the Oak to try out on the rink in the rear garden.

If you want to know more about the game, or fancy trying out for the team, contact Steve on 07754 868488.

The next two home matches are on 21 and 28 June.

Concrete proposal

A mystery mound of solid concrete has appeared at the junction of Riccards Lane and the A21.

With no hard evidence of where the pile has come from the parish council believes it may have been surplus to requirements following roadworks and new signage

Rother District and East Sussex County councillors are set to find out who is responsible and get the mound moved.

Conquest coconuts

The Friends of Conquest Hospital are holding a summer fete on the school playing field opposite the hospital on 15 July, 11am-3pm.

The event will feature a coconut shy, crockery smash, craft stalls, entertainment, a bar and a barbecue. Entry is free.

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Evening sunshine is the crowning glory of coronation picnic

Well, we picked the right day to celebrate! While neighbouring villages shivered under umbrellas on the day of the coronation, Whatlington enjoyed beautiful evening light on the Sunday for its Coronation Serenade.

Stalwart volunteers erected the gazebos and set out the tables for the evening's event in Lesley and Hugh Aphthorp's field.

About 80 people – covering a 90-year age range – came to listen to the Bodiam Concert Band, who have often performed for villagers in the past.

Charlotte Moore, of the Village Hall committee which staged the event, says: "Picnics were spread out, corks popped, raffle tickets purchased and we settled down to enjoy a tuneful mixture, from Starlight Express to the Dambusters March to a Queen medley, and much more.



"It was lovely to see so many children there, running about and enjoying themselves, and behaving beautifully.

"The event finished with the National Anthem and three cheers for the King.

"Many thanks to all who helped (and cleared away next day) and of course to Hugh and Lesley for the generous loan of their field."





Churchgoers raise a glass to the new king

Whatlington Church bells rang out over the coronation weekend of the as part of the national Ring for the King initiative.

The church held a Special Coronation Service on the Sunday, attended by around 40 people and based on a Church of England template prepared specifically for the day.

Churchwarden Jeffrey Bridges said: "It was led by Rev John Hawkins, who kindly put everything together for us and printed the orders of service.

"In addition to the hymns and Bible reading the poem My Father's Chair by Rudyard Kipling was read, reflecting the stability given by the monarchy.

"Our husband and wife organists gave us some wonderful music – Cecy played the organ and Russell accompanied playing the trumpet – with



**Bell rings in another monarch!
The oldest bell at Whatlington dates from around 1350 so will have rung for coronations across many centuries!**

the Trumpet Voluntary played at the end of the service."

Afterwards everyone drank a toast to King Charles III and enjoyed a slice of home-made cake. Several bottles of Prosecco were consumed in the process, along with sparkling elderflower as a non-alcoholic alternative.

The church was decorated with flower displays and a Union Flag draped on the

Communion Table.

Jeffrey added: "The Churchwardens would like to thank all those who worked so hard and gave their time and donated items to make the service such a success.

"The church was open across the weekend for visitors to see the flowers and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere."

Nursery site planning bid for five homes

Dilapidated glasshouses that once provided flowers for more than 20 local florists could be replaced by a new housing development if planning permission is granted.

The Hillside Nursery site in Woodmans Green Road is the subject of an outline planning application for five 4/5 bedroom homes.

The plan would see the now derelict glasshouses demolished to make way for the development at Dorrells Farm.

The nursery had been a thriving wholesale supplier until around 2010 but business has since declined.

The application to Rother District Council states that 'the rather stark and regular appearance of the glasshouses will be replaced by dwellings constructed in the Sussex vernacular with sufficient space to

enable a sensitive landscaping scheme'.

A new vehicular access from the development onto the A21 is proposed and, as a result, National Highways, which is responsible for the safety of road users, is urging Rother to delay a decision beyond the council's proposed 23 June.

It is asking for a delay of three months, unless the application is refused, for more details to be provided on the effect on A21 traffic.

It notes that the proposed new access is close to the 50mph speed limit and calls for speed surveys to be carried out in both directions 120m from the entrance.

■ Full details of the plan can be found at www.rother.gov.uk and go to Planning and Building Control/Online Applications.

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Happiness is . . . tasty treats and a big pile of cash



Bunting, balloons, music and a raffle: it can only be a fundraiser!

The offer of cakes, traybakes, scones and quiches sealed the deal for a wonderful event that raised an impressive £837 to share between the Alzheimer's Society and Alzheimer's Research UK.

Event organiser Anne Smith said: "Both these charities are in desperate need of funds . . . as are many others I hear you cry. However, the statistics for dementia make for disturbing reading: an alarming and increasing number of diagnoses, the staggering cost to the economy and the shameful lack of funding in comparison to other charities.

"Moreover, as 49 per cent of adults say that dementia is the health condition they fear most, it

is vital to raise funds for further research."

Those that attended the event were treated to some mouth-watering delights to consume on the spot or taken home.

Anne added: "Despite a big gathering for the event there are always a smaller number of stalwarts who deserve a special thank you for their support.

"These fabulous people, and you know who you are, provided cakes and/or raffle prizes and helped with serving, clearing up etc.

"The success of the event has spurred us to support more community events in the future. Hopefully, we will be joined by more people from the village who will undoubtedly gain something, in pounds if nothing else!

"You can't buy happiness, but you can buy cake and that's kinda the same thing."





Cakes, cuppas and plants prove popular

A coffee morning and table sale held at the Village Hall raised more than £550 for Whatlington Church funds.

There was a constant stream of people during the morning, stopping by for a cuppa and to make purchases.

Churchwarden John Crouch said: "As ever, cakes and plants proved highly welcome. It was

also nice to have stalls from groups across and beyond the village, which added to the variety.

"There was a wide range of books, with those remaining taken to the church where, during the summer when the church is open, they will be available for purchase or to swap.

"A massive thank you to everyone who served refreshments, manned stalls, donated or just came along and spent money."

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Caravan chaos continues

There is little hope of easing the chaos caused by residential caravans on the back of huge lorries negotiating Battle's narrow High Street.

Former parish councillor Tim Underhill has asked East Sussex County councillor Kathryn Field if anything could be done, such as banning the lorries or making the journeys at night.

He said sometimes the lorries travelled in convoy, causing even greater disruption.

But she told the parish council that, as an A-road, any vehicle can use it at any time.

Audit check on parish council

Whatlington Parish Council's books are to be inspected by an external auditor in addition to its annual internal audit. The move is to ensure the council's financial operations are conducted in a responsible and proper manner.

Each year five per cent of local councils are selected to undergo an external audit, with all papers submitted being available on the parish website.

ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH

Churchwardens: Jeffrey Bridges 01424 772535/07446 903239 and John Crouch 07788 416903

Email: whatlingtonparishchurch@gmail.com Web: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5226

New bid for vicar

The latest round of advertising for a new minister came to an end last month.

Any suitable candidates will be interviewed in mid-June.

It is hoped changing the status of the role from 'Priest-in-Charge, House for Duty' to 'Rector, House for Duty' will make the post more appealing as it offers greater job security.

In the meantime, all services have been maintained at both Whatlington and sister church Sedlescombe, thanks to the support of various retired ministers, in particular John Hawkins and Stephanie Prosser.

Churchwarden John Crouch added: "We are delighted that there will be a wedding taking place at the church in the summer.

"We continue to be available for all baptisms, weddings and funerals – contact the wardens via the numbers at the top of the page."

Patronal Flower Festival dates

■ The weekend of 21-23 July is the Patronal Flower Festival when the church will be open all weekend, concluding with a Patronal Evening service at 6pm on the Sunday. Refreshments will be available on Saturday afternoon when there will also be a competition.

■ The evening service on 27 August will be a repeat of last year's successful 'Hymns and Pimms'. Weather permitting, this will once again be outside.

■ Services through the summer

1st and 3rd Sunday, 9.15am, Holy Communion.

2nd Sunday, 10.30am, All age service.

4th Sunday, 6pm, Evening Prayer.

Where a 5th Sunday occurs it is a Joint Benefice Service: 30 July, 10.30am at Sedlescombe – Holy Communion.



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IN YOUR GARDEN

Tom Schollar

Put the mower away until August!



The pictures show a meadow with orchids, oxeye daisies and yellow rattle at Dixter

Did you give your mower a rest in May? We do, but in fact it gets a rest between March and August! By the time we cut the grass it is quite long, so not just a case of setting the blade a bit higher and carrying on where you left off in March.

Instead, you may need a strimmer, hedge trimmer or even a power scythe.

For a classic perennial meadow (as distinct from a meadow of disturbed soil with poppies and cornflowers or a meadow with larger flowers, like large camassias, ox-eye daisies and valerian) you need to tailor your mowing times to suit the flowers you want to encourage.

So we try to get the grass as short as possible by early March before the daffodils appear and then cut it again in August after the plants that we want to

multiply have set seed. We then cut regularly until winter rain stops us.

Remove the grass clippings. Don't mulch them, as you want to reduce the fertility of the soil, to weaken the grasses and maximise the gaps in the sward



for wild flowers to germinate.

The other realistic way to weaken the grass is to grow yellow rattle (*left*). This is a semi-parasitic annual which reduces the vigour of the grass.

The time when you cut is key, as you need to let the yellow rattle (and other wild flowers) grow and the seed to ripen before you cut.

Leave the cuttings to dry and release its seeds for next year before you rake up. Collecting the dried grass can be a fair bit of work, so make your meadow a size you can cope with.

Next time: how to encourage wildflowers in your meadow.

SEDESLESCOMBE AND DISTRICT GARDEN SOCIETY

www.sedlescombegarden.society.org.uk

Cultivate your interest

Our aim: to promote to residents of Sedlescombe, Whatlington and surrounding areas an interest in all aspects of gardening, including maintaining the rich diversity of garden plants to help combat the effects of climate change.

How we do it: shows, speakers, trips, social events, newsletter.

How to join: Contact Secretary Brenda Page on 01424 870455 or email sdgs.secretary@gmail.com

What it costs: £9 per person per year or £12 for joint membership.

COMING EVENTS

Sedlescombe Village Hall
Wednesday 14 June, 7pm:
 Matthew Brewer, new Head Gardener at Fairlight Hall, will give an illustrated talk about his work at Marwood Hill Gardens in Devon.

Saturday 16 September:
 Autumn Show.

Wednesday 18 October:
 Coach trip to Sheffield Park to see the fantastic autumn colour. Coach charge expected to be just under £20. Entry is free to National Trust members and £14 for non-members.

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