

# Parish Chairman's Easter Report

Stephen Braden gives us the Parish Council's report.

With reflection on the shock passing of David Clegg, I think that he would have approved of the hive of activity which took over the Village to fill his District Council seat. At a time when voter apathy seems widespread, the Village teamed with rival teams of canvassers. Coloured boards of yellow and blue decorated our roads and leaflets fluttered through our letterboxes. The result, as you know, was a decisive victory for Marge Harvey and her Liberal Democrat team. So, David's baton has been passed, Marge will be an exemplary Councillor and will represent us, and David well at Petersfield.

In the Parish, we have eagerly awaited the slightly delayed arrival of our new (but antique looking) streetlamps around the Green.

Our Parish Hall is going through a troubled period. Not a surprise with a new hall in Redhill Road and another one planned for the Church on the Green. Our Hall has suffered from lack of investment over decades and, although Mike Stafford and his team have battled on diligently, it was difficult to see how to solve this problem without a sizeable increase in funds from the Parish. We have, therefore, recommended an increase in the Precept for the coming year of £2,600 towards the Hall.

Development continues to be high on our agenda with proposed developments in most corners of the Village. Currently we have or are considering plans around Bowes Hill and Wellsworth Lane, Deers Leap and on the ground behind the Castle Pub amongst numerous others. Perhaps a cooling of the housing market will discourage other money making schemes?

We haven't taken our eye off the flooding issue. The recent, updated flood maps show what we have all experienced and that the Finchdean Road area of the Village is prone to flooding. We had the assurance that the water levels were low last year and we have noted the works done by the Park recently. Lets hope that that is not prescient of Michael Fish and his infamous weather forecast!!

My thanks, as always, to my fellow Councillors and Clerks, if for no other reason than for putting up with me!!

**Steve Braden - [steve@ubiqueleisure.co.uk](mailto:steve@ubiqueleisure.co.uk)**

# A NEW BROOM

A new Chairman takes the reins of the RCA this month, welcome Steve Green:

I was pleased to accept the nomination to become chairman of the RCA in spite of fierce competition from other parties, or not. I have been on the committee for the past year and many people will know me from my days at Livingstones estate agents (now Keats). One of the popular reasons that people looked to move into, or stay in, the village is that it has a good atmosphere, structure and is a great place to raise a family. So what has this got to do with the RCA?

I would like to now quote from the original RCA minutes "The RCA is an association formed by the residents of Rowlands Castle to represent the interests of it's population. All residents over the age of 18 of Rowlands Castle, Finchdean, Dean Lane End and Forestside shall be members of the Association. - What is the purpose of the Association ? The aim of the Association is to conserve the character of Rowlands Castle, to provide a channel of communication on matters of local interest and to enhance the life of the village."

So why don't we hear from any residents? Are there no concerns, matters of local interest or reasons to get up and have a say ? I am sure there are, and I hope to raise the profile of the RCA and the confidence of the residents to use the RCA as a channel of communication which may be more approachable and less beaurocratic than perhaps the official channels may appear.

The two main ongoing projects of the RCA are the magazine which is published three or four times per year. This has been redesigned recently with the help of Dawn & Mike and it has received many positive comments since. This is distributed to the residents who are asked for a minimum donation of £2 towards the cost. For those who have not been asked for the donation recently there is a collection tin at Castle Stores. The other event we stage is the bonfire and fireworks and I am particularly pleased to be chairman in the year which is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Guy Fawkes foiled attempt to blow up Parliament. We have already booked the fireworks with an increased budget which will mean a longer (yes, we listened to your comments!) and bigger display.

The annual social evening has just taken place (26<sup>th</sup> Feb) and I would like to say a big 'thank you' to all of you who supported the quiz, jazz and wine tasting evening. It was a great success and, I think, a good time was had by all. It was good to see so many of you there including the younger members of the audience who were well received and were all, generally, well behaved and also had a good time.

If you feel there any issues or concerns which you feel the RCA should become involved with please do contact any of the committee members. I hope I can continue and build on the existing success of the RCA in the years to come.

**Stephen Green**