

## Planning & Highways Committee Report from Councillor Philip Howson

My second year as Chair of Planning & Highways has been busy and very interesting.

The Committee has increased the frequency of its meetings to three weekly and arranged for a meeting in August to ensure comments on applications to the Planning Authority are made in a timely manner.

The Committee has continued to champion the residents in respect of action to prevent the ongoing problem of parking on grass verges in the Town by continual liaison with the local Police.

In addition the Committee has sought to help improve the condition of roads in the Town through constant contact with the County Council Highways Department. This has been greatly assisted by having two County Councillors on the Committee.

Members of the public and Committee Members at meetings have also raised concerns about the controversial works on the A259. These concerns have been fed back to the Highways Authority through the two County Council members on this Committee.

We continue to oversee the maintenance of the bus shelters and they are now cleaned twice as often for the no extra cost, town facilities are now inspected weekly as opposed to on a best efforts basis.

We have continued to oversee the contract for the cutting of highways verges and have achieved savings of nearly £16,000 in the re-tendering exercise for the grass verge cutting for 2009/10. Economies of scale have been achieved by a partnership approach with Peacehaven Town Council.

The Planning and Highways Committee looks at all planning applications for properties within the Town Council's boundaries and recommends to Lewes District Council whether an application should be granted or refused planning permission and the reasons why.

# TELSCOMBE & EAST SALTDEAN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

## 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2009



During the last 12 months the Committee has considered 46 planning applications, 1 tree works and had 7 appeals. All applications have to be considered on planning grounds and cannot be refused because of personal opinion. Planning grounds include un-neighborly (by virtue of height and proximity to party boundary) and out of character with existing property/street scene.

A planning application cannot be refused because of loss of view, property value or trade or because of boundary or other disputes between neighbors.

Lewes District Council Planning Officers consider all recommendations and objections from affected residents and decide whether each application should be considered by the Planning Applications Committee or whether the officers should make the decision.

Lewes District council aims to delegate 90/95% of planning decisions to the Officers.

This Committee has some concerns about the number of Officer decisions that are contrary to this Town Council's recommendations and propose to ask for the Planning Committee to consider more of our refusal decisions not to be given to Officers with delegated powers.

The most contentious planning issues have been the planning application from Southern Water. This has now gone to judicial review and we hope to get good news shortly. The Council and this Committee will continue to fight this application most strenuously.

This Committee would like to acknowledge the massive amount of hard work put in by members of Proud to fight the proposal.

I would like to close by thanking the Town Clerk, Martin Duckworth, and all of his staff for a superb job done this year.