



PEMBURY

your village newsletter

march 1978 issue no.

16

ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING

A special date for your diary is WEDNESDAY 15th MARCH.

Because at 8.00p.m. in the Village Hall your Parish Council reports to you on its activities over the past twelve months and the occasion gives you the opportunity to ask any questions on its work and raise any matter that concerns you.

This chance should not be missed because only parishioners still have the right to be heard in this way, it is not enjoyed by residents in Tunbridge Wells.

We hope to see you on the 15th.

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published by Pembury Parish Council

VIEWPOINT

when the talking has to stop

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read of the very latest developments in our very own version of the "Forsyte Saga" - our two by-passes.

In Newsletter (14) the K.C.C. programme for the B2015 was set down. Newsletter (15) carried a report on the handing of the petition to the Minister of Transport asking for an immediate decision on a completion date for the A21 by-pass. Action from County Hall and Whitehall at long last seemed to be on the horizon.

Alas, it was nothing but a desert mirage.

We have now waited 44 years for our by-pass to the A21 and very serious consideration must now be given by all of us to mounting a continuous campaign of active protest. Whitehall must be left in no doubt as to our grievances and our determination to be rid of our traffic menace.

Last June at the meeting in the Village Hall, you backed the Parish Council to join with our neighbouring villages of Lamberhurst, Hurst Green and Robertsbridge. As a result the A21 ACTION GROUP has been formed.

The GROUP is now discussing the possibility of co-ordinating action on the same day at the same time in all four villages to make the A21 a national matter, which the politicians cannot shrug off into their pending trays. Pembury must support this campaign to the best of its ability.

EDITOR :

D. Hawes Richards
54 Hastings Road. (2779)

editorial secretary :

Mrs. M. Board
30 Henwoods Cres. (3169)



'HOPES' – petition goes to Whitehall

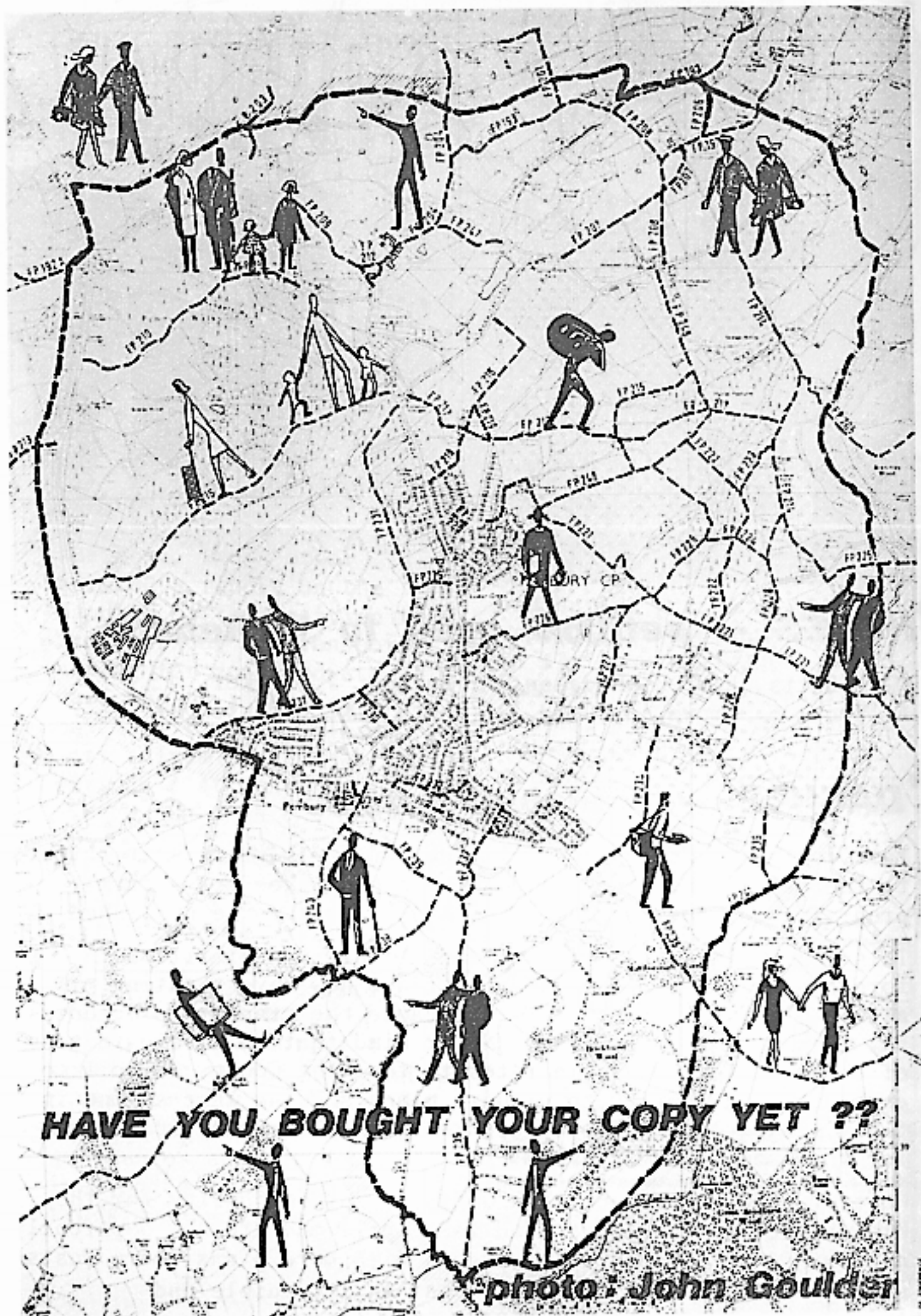
D.W. Betts, Rev. C. Hodgson, M. Walter, J. Barker
A. Penn, G. Brown, J. Reed. (Photo: Kent Messenger)

'DASHED' – Whitehall replies

Last month the Parish Council received a reply to their letter to the Department of Transport which had asked for a firm programme for completion of the A21 By-Pass to be published.

This request has been refused due to the impossibility of forecasting a date. The Department are now investigating alternative lines for the road because the standard procedures say that this must be done. Never mind that we have paid tens of thousands of pounds in rates to the Kent County Council to enable that authority to prepare plans showing what anyone in the village already knows - there is only one practical line for the road.

However, the Department took over the responsibility for the High Street and Hastings Road last April and are now apparently determined to start all over again with more plans, more tests, more meetings and more bump. What an incredible and indefensible waste of our money.



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photo: John Goulden

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why

2

C of E

?

?

churches

by Reverend Christopher Hodgson

The old Church down by Kent College was originally built in about 1200 AD and is the Parish Church of Pembury.

The Black Death (14th Century) the Reformation (16th Century) and the building of the new coach road from London to Hastings and Rye (17th Century) sounded the knell of the Village and the size of the new Pembury along the sides of the new coach road.

Last century the Marquis of Camden initiated the building of a "draught church" to serve the population of the new Pembury. It was built by public subscription with stone quarried from nearby land and was opened in 1847. Both churches are dedicated to St. Peter.

Why then two Churches today? The Upper Church serves those who like to partake weekly of the Lord's Supper in the Lord's House on the Lord's Day and so the main service is the 9.45a.m. Sung Communion Service. The Upper Church also serves the needs of boys and girls at the 11.30a.m. Junior Church every Sunday.

The Parish Church serves those who like the traditional Service of Morning Prayer or Matins at 11.15a.m. each Sunday. The Church is also attended once a month on Sundays during term time by the boarders of Kent College. Baptisms, weddings and funeral services take place regularly in both Churches.

The Parish and Upper Church are both of high architectural merit and they are both living places of worship. The Village is growing. Congregations are increasing. There is a place for both Churches in Pembury.

BUT which COMMITTEE.....?

"The English seem to glory in setting up a Committee; this usually means nothing will get done." This challenging sentence opened an article in the Pembury Newsletter March 1977.

Whilst it is true that some Committees develop an attitude of mind in its members which shelters them from taking responsibility and backing their own judgement, often this is because inadequate analysis is undertaken as to the real, effective role required of the Committee in question. This is no longer the case with the K.A.P.C., Tunbridge Wells Area Committee. Its members are agreed on the major role it must play in local affairs. Briefly, this role is to gather, and then represent, the corporate views of its 15 Member Parish Councils and to develop improved liaison with the District Council and other Authorities.

To do this the Committee has recognised it has to be better informed and more expert in those affairs likely to affect the Tunbridge Wells District as a whole. To this end study groups have been established consisting of Committee Members and expert interests outside the Committee, to examine five major sectors of interest likely to affect County, District and Parishes. These sectors of interest are not those daily and weekly domestic affairs which constitute the main work of Parish Councils, but include policy areas - planning, transportation, finance, water supplies and charges, the future of parishes and their boundaries.

There is no illusion of "glory" in the Tunbridge Wells Area Committee. Only a keen sense of need to be vigilant, to watch future trends and then to develop an active spirit of liaison with the District Council and other Authorities, and thereby to ensure that the legitimate, corporate interests of the Parish Councils in the area are safeguarded. But one hard fact has to be faced. A Committee, any Committee is only as effective as its constituent members. And because the membership of the Tunbridge Wells Area Committee has shown a growing concern, and dedication, it is probable that the second half of that opening sentence will be confounded.

H. J. CRUICKSHANK

(Chairman)

K. A. P. C. - Tunbridge Wells Area Committee

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PROFILE

(2)

by
**Robert
Allen**



ARTHUR PENN

50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE VILLAGE

Penns of Pembury - the name goes with the same sort of inevitability as bread and butter. And it is inevitable too, that the head of the Penn family, Mr. Arthur Penn, should have played a leading part in the life of the Village for over half a century.

On April 28 Arthur Penn, Chairman of Pembury Parish Council, will celebrate 50 years continuous service on the Council. When he was elected as a young man of 21 the Chairman was the head of the Village School, Mr. A.E. Naish.

The Penn family has been connected with the Parish Council ever since its foundation in the last century. His grandfather and father were, respectively, the first and second Parish Clerks and when he became a member himself his grandfather's widow was a Parish Councillor.

The G. and F. stand for his grandfather George and his great-uncle, Frank who set up the business in 1862. George was a carpenter and Frank was a bricklayer. As was customary in those days their work included undertaking - a side of the business which continues to this day.

Frank died about the turn of the century and George in 1910. By that time Arthur Penn's father, Ernest George, was in the family firm which he ultimately took over.

Already they had left a considerable mark on the Village. Penns built the Free Church and its manse, the old Methodist Chapel in Hastings Road, Pembury Ridge, a large house now demolished and its grounds developed as a housing estate in Lower Green Road, much of the council estate at Lower Green, another at Bo-Peep and a number of private houses besides.

Arthur Penn went to Skinners' School and when he left in 1923 he naturally joined the family concern. He was apprenticed to his father as a carpenter and joiner - a skill he can still exercise.

But only four years later his father died. Arthur Penn was just 21 and Penns became a limited company with young Arthur as company secretary and a member of the board.

He recalls that when Penns built Camden Avenue in the early thirties the far end of the road was limited to its present position because the by-pass was planned to go just a little to the south.

But life in Pembury was not all work for Arthur Penn. As a youngster he played table tennis and badminton at the old Church Institute at Lower Green - then the Village Community Centre.

He played cricket and football for the Village. Indeed his connection with the cricket club continues to this day as its President. He played until the 1960's and was captain of the side for over 20 years. In addition he was treasurer for many years, a post he also held for the football club and the British Legion.

In 1942 Arthur Penn was called up into the Royal Engineers. He served in various stations in Kent. Then his unit was

engaged in experiments with the Pluto oil pipe line that played so important a part in the Normandy invasion in 1944.

"But although we did all the trials, including wet landings in the Isle of Wight and the Welsh coast, we never had a hand in operating it in action", he says.

However, he did get to Normandy after D.Day, spending the next few months restoring the water and electricity supplies to the shattered city of Caen. Later he was in Belgium and Holland helping to repair the damage done by the battles which ended in the German retreat.

If the atom bomb had not been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki Arthur Penn would have been in the invasion force being assembled to storm the Japanese mainland. As it was he spent the last winter of his service peacefully in India. Shortly before he was demobilised, there was a chance of going to Borneo to re-start the damaged oil wells there.

"If I'd gone out there and got mixed up in the oil business I might never have returned to Pembury", he says.

With his wife, Grace, he is a member of the Parish Church and has recently been appointed one of the trustees of the appeal fund launched to raise money for the preservation of the old Church.

Arthur Penn's lifetime connection with the business, sporting and administrative life of Pembury indicate a love for village life and a belief in its value.

"When I first joined the Parish Council", he says, "the population of Pembury was under 1,000. Now it's about 6,500. There is a great turnover of population, which is reflected in the composition of the Parish Council. I want to see Pembury become the community it once was".

Arthur Penn's memories of Pembury - and there are many older residents than he - show just how the Village has changed with the motor car age.

Before World War I there was no building in Lower Green Road between the present Roman Catholic presbytery and Knights Place. Hop gardens lined most of both sides of the road -

there was a hop garden on what is now the recreation ground. In the hopping season hordes of London pickers descended on the Village, shopkeepers erected metal grilles in front of their counters and the High Street would be lined with horses and carts bringing the hop pickers to the Village.

Between the wars and again in the fifties, Pembury was faced with threats of a take-over by Tunbridge Wells. Incorporation in the old royal borough was fought off. Only in 1974 with the reorganisation of local government did Tunbridge Wells get into Pembury and a dozen other villages through the back door.

Perhaps one good result of this shake-up has been to make Parish Councils take a greater pride in their independence because today it can fairly be said they are the only local authorities all of whose members are personally involved with the areas they represent.

Arthur Penn is certainly proud of what Pembury Parish Council has achieved in the past. About 70 years ago it raised a loan to put sewers into the Village - a job they wouldn't be allowed to do now. The loan was raised, the sewers laid and the money repaid by the mid-twenties. And, says Arthur Penn, the work was of such good quality that, with the exception of the link between the primary school and the sewage works, those sewers are still in use today.

Other loans followed - for the Henwood Green allotments, street lighting, the recreation ground, the burial ground and latest of all, for the Woodside recreation ground.

Now that he has retired from active business, Arthur Penn has the time to be a voluntary helper at the Seven Springs Cheshire Home in Tunbridge Wells.

Perhaps Arthur Penn's philosophy of life is summed up in his remarks about the church restoration work he has been involved in during his business life. "I like to think that what I was doing will remain in use for centuries". This sense of continuity has inspired his public service in the sphere of Village life. That is the life compounded of local pride and fellowship which is the best bulwark against the drab uniformity which the pessimists fear is threatening us all.

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RATS & RATES

by A.G.PENN (chairman - parish council)

Just a small difference in spelling but two subjects greatly disliked by the vast majority of people. Yet without RATES we should undoubtedly have RATS, as the clearance and disposal of refuse is only one of the many services covered by the rates. Most of the services we take for granted are provided out of the rates we pay. Education, Police, Fire Brigades, some transport, Library, Drainage, Planning, some roads and many other items are mainly covered by the 1st stage of the Rating Authorities. There are three Authorities, namely Kent County, Tunbridge Wells Borough (which covers the whole area from Bidborough to Cranbrook and Frittenden) then the last and smallest area Pembury Parish.

The County rate is the same over the whole of Kent.

The Borough rate is the same over the whole of its area.

The Parish rate is levied to cover those special expenses peculiar to the parish concerned.

On the whole the old rural areas come out of this system rather badly as central government decreed that the new areas should all pay the same "district or area" rate. In the case of Pembury the difference between the district rate in the old Tonbridge Rural District is 4.5p in the pound. This amounts to a matter of over £20,000 per annum as from this year and it seems we have received nothing tangible in benefits. Of course, over the four years during which this amount has been reached there has been considerable inflation which should account for some of the difference, but the "Borough" rate remains at the same basic 12.33p so that it would appear that the rural areas are paying the whole cost of this inflation.

This Parish now has to face the expense of new apparatus for children's play areas, renewal and repairs of mowing machines for the Cemeteries and playing fields, rise in wages for staff and paying for all those things you want done to make life in this Village more pleasant for both young and old.

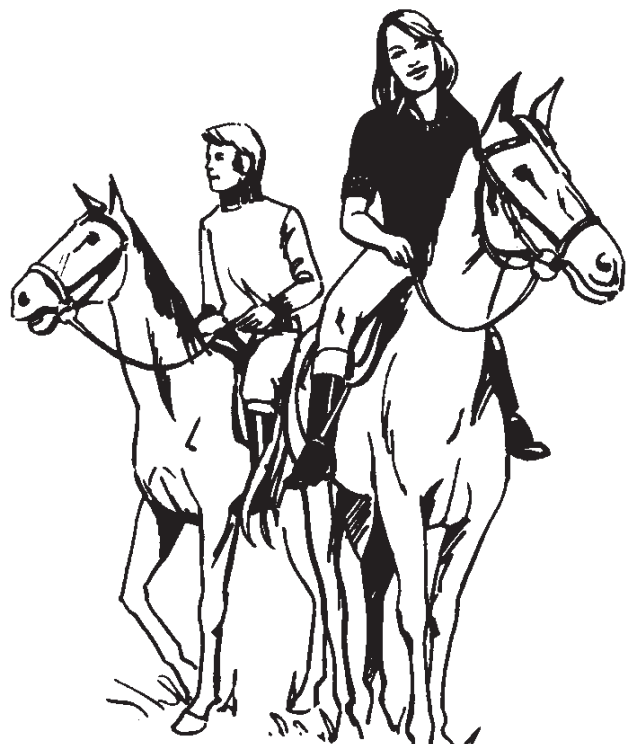
YOUR LETTERS

Sir,

I can appreciate your comments on dogs fouling the footpaths. For our part we had trained our dog to use the gutter. Since moving to Pembury however, the dog has a real dilemma - whether or not to use the gutter at great danger to himself, or use the footpath and incur our wrath.

Our views have been somewhat tempered by the amount of garden rubbish, including what you believe it, rabbit droppings and straw deposited by humans on the bridle path adjacent to the Recreational Ground. In my garden alone I regularly remove a considerable number of beer cans and sundry items.

R.H.P. Parsons,
51 Lower Green Rd.



Lovely beasts aren't they? Yes, but unfortunately like so many apparent things of beauty not so lovely close up, and in fact in some cases positively terrifying. Like the public footpaths that cross farmers land, horses and people can be uneasy neighbours in built up areas.

The Parish Council regularly receive complaints about them being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sometimes it is a case of a horse being ridden down a narrow footpath between high hedges to the obvious danger of others - sometimes it is horses being ridden on tarmac footpaths with no thought of pedestrians safety - or again churning up country footpaths with their hooves to make it impossible to walk comfortably.

As with our other four legged friends mentioned in the last newsletter, how about a little thought for others?

Courtesy "Local Council Review"



"When I said flooded out I didn't mean with contributions."

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COMMUNITY CENTRE

Since the last newsletter, the Community Centre has taken a step forwards - or backwards - depending on the viewpoint of the reader.

On December 21st the Pembury Community Association Council decided that an approach would have to be made to the Parish Council.

The Association was reluctant to see the project abandoned but it was of the opinion that the inability to raise funds to support the necessary Grant Applications was holding up further progress on the project.

The only alternative left was to ask if the Parish Council could assist in any way, whether financially or otherwise to avoid collapse of the whole idea. The specially convened Parish Council Meeting on 26th January passed the following motions.

- (1) THAT THIS PARISH COUNCIL IS PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION COUNCIL.

FOR: SEVEN AGAINST: FOUR

- (2) THAT THIS PARISH COUNCIL RESOLVES THAT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME IT WILL MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PEMBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE ASSOCIATION A LOAN OF UP TO £50,000 IN RESPECT OF THEIR COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT.

FOR: SEVEN AGAINST: FOUR

- (3) THAT THIS PARISH COUNCIL RESOLVES THAT BEFORE THE AMOUNT AND TYPE OF FINANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY CENTRE IS DECIDED, A PUBLIC MEETING WILL BE HELD TO GIVE PARISHIONERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THEIR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

FOR: ~~SEVEN~~ AGAINST: ~~FOUR~~

(Twelve Councillors present - one vacancy)

It is not the object of this report to give any opinion for or against the Centre but simply to fully inform the whole Village of the current position.

Correction: VOTE ON MOTION (3)

FOR: ELEVEN AGAINST: NONE

COMMUNITY CENTRE (continued)

But it is necessary perhaps to explain that the Parish Council COULD proceed with any loan, grant or contribution to any proposal in the village without further reference to parishioners. The Council has been elected for a three year term which ends in May 1979 and disagreement with its decisions can be clearly shown in the ballot box at that time. Nevertheless, it is much better to listen to all sides of an argument first, before a final decision is made. The Council, in passing Motion 3 above, obviously agrees.

the PEMBURY PARISH CHURCH repair appeal

The drive to raise funds for the repair of the roof and floors of Pembury's 12th Century Parish Church of St. Peter is now getting under way. At a public meeting called by the Pembury 2000 Committee on November 25th, Mr. Derek Hawes-Richards proposed to those present the formation of a body to be called The Friends of Pembury Parish Church. There was enthusiastic support and a provisional committee was nominated.

This provisional committee met again, without delay on November 28th and formally launched the Friends of Pembury Parish Church. Mr. Peter Williamson was elected Chairman, Mr. Howard Evans (of 18 Gimble Way) was elected Secretary and Mr. Dennis Ould Treasurer. Four Trustees were appointed, Mrs. Clarke, Mr. Firkins, Mr. Penn and Miss Standen and sub-committees were formed to arrange the different aspects of the Friends fund-raising activities.

Nearly £300 is already in hand, before any proper fund raising schemes have been launched and the Friends will be registered as a charity so that tax may be reclaimed on money given under covenant. A further announcement will be made shortly, when events get past the planning stage.

Urgent repairs to the roof and floors, plus the renewal of wiring and heating equipment is estimated to need £15000 a part of which it is hoped will be met from official grants.

for your diary

- APR. 2 Pembury Soc. - Footpaths Walk - Bo-Peep 2.15pm
3 Darby & Joan Club - Coffee Morning - RC Hall 10-12.
7 Even. W.I. - National Trust - V.Hall 7.45pm
10 Parish Council - Allotments Planning & Amenities
10 Hort. Soc. - Floral Art Group - V.Hall 8pm
11 Darby & Joan Club - R.C.Hall 2 - 5pm
15 Pembury Music Soc. - "Spring Concert" Pembury School 7.30
in aid of Parish Church Fund
24 Parish Council - Highways, Planning & Finance
25 Darby & Joan Club R.C.Hall 2 - 5pm
27 Hort.Soc.- Talk by A. Dashwood on Dahlias V. Hall 8pm
- MAY 4 Afternoon W.I. - Resolutions - VCO Mrs. Holder V.Hall 2.30
5 Evening W.I. - Resolutions for the NFWI - AGM -
Miss A. Harvey VCO 7.45 - V.Hall
6 Pembury Soc. - Footpaths Walk - Stone Court Bus Stop 2.15
8 Annual Parish Council Meeting
8 Hort. Soc. - Floral Art Group - V.Hall 8pm
9 Darby & Joan Club - R.C.Hall 2 - 5pm
22 Parish Council - Allotments Planning & Amenities
23 Darby & Joan Club - R.C.Hall 2 - 5pm
25 Hort. Soc. -Talk by B.J.Muddle "Summer Gardening" V.Hall
8pm
27 Hort. Soc. - Plant Sale - Woodside Road Shed 2pm
- JUNE 1 Afternoon W.I. - "Humour, The Best Medicine" Mrs. C. Grover
V.Hall 2.30pm
2 Evening W.I.- "The Pilgrims Way in Kent" C.H. Prestage
V.Hall 7.45pm
4 Pembury Soc. - Footpaths Walk - Camden Car Park 2.15pm
5 Parish Council - Highways, Planning & Finance
6 Darby & Joan Club - RC Hall 2 - 5pm
12 Hort.Soc. - "Floral Art Group" V.Hall 8pm
19 Parish Council Meeting - Dower House 8pm
20 Darby & Joan Club - RC Hall 2 - 5pm
24 Pembury Music Group - Concert in Lower Church 8pm
- Every Friday - W.I. Market - V.Hall 10.30 - 11.30a.m.
Every Monday - Pembury Old Tyme Dance Club - R.C.Hall -
7.45 - 10.15pm (20p Members 25p Non-Members)

The views of this Newsletter do not necessarily represent
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