

PLANNING INFORMATION

Changes to Permitted Development Rights

On the 1st October 2008, the rules concerning the changes householders may make to their properties without applying for planning permission were changed. The changes cover issues such as the size of an extension or hard surfacing of front gardens. It should be noted that planning permission WILL be required to lay or replace hard surfacing of more than 5 square metres UNLESS permeable surfaces are used.

Planning laws are complicated and it is always advisable to discuss a planned project with Development Control staff at Mid Sussex District Council.

For further information, the Planning Portal website has an interactive guide: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/hhg/houseguide.html>

and the Government has produced guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pavingfrontgardens>

An Update on the Core Strategy

As residents will be aware, long term development plans for the period up to 2026 are being prepared by Mid Sussex District Council.

The Core Strategy is the central document of the new Local Development Framework and will set out a vision for the District to 2026, core policies on many issues as well as broad locations for the new homes allocated by the South East Plan.

The District Council received over 5,000 responses to the first public consultation in February – March. All responses, some of them lengthy, can be read on the Council's website.

Proposals in the draft Core Strategy now includes the strategic development of 25,000 houses together with traffic relief at East Grinstead as well as the allocation of a total of 1,000 houses to the villages in the district. A subsequent Rural Issues Background Paper considered the development potential of each village. Ashurst Wood was classed as a Local Service Centre meaning that there are a number of shops and businesses, pubs, a school and access to employment opportunities and health centres nearby. The village is also identified as having a significant need for Affordable Housing. The paper states that the village has intermediate growth potential, suitable for between 30 and 100 houses. However, because of environmental constraints such as the AONB, development is likely to be at the lower end of that scale and the Parish Council would hope that a good percentage of that figure would be made up of affordable housing for local people.

More recently, the Government has proposed increases in the housing numbers set out in the South East Plan with the allocation for Mid-Sussex being raised from 15,000 to 18,000. MSDC has objected strongly to the increase, stating that such numbers are not deliverable and the existing infrastructure could not cope. The Council has indicated that it will consider legal action against the Government. The Parish Council has also objected to the proposed changes.

The current economic climate has affected the housing market around the country with developments in some areas being cancelled and a significant reduction in numbers of new houses being built. It is difficult to predict what impact this will have locally. Clearly the annual targets for house-building are likely to fall behind schedule. However, we are told that as these are long-term plans the process will continue. The Parish Council will therefore continue to keep up to date with the progress of the Local Development Framework and respond to documents as they come out.

Jenny Forbes.

Affordable Housing Update

The Parish Council have been liaising with English Rural Housing, Mid Sussex District Council and Action in Rural Sussex to prepare a scheme for affordable homes in the village. Local planners and highways officers have been asked to comment on a possible location. If this is acceptable in planning terms then the Parish Council will consider whether to support the scheme. The next stage will be to arrange a public consultation event where village residents will have the opportunity to look at proposed plans, ask questions and make comments. There will also be a chance for people in need of an affordable home to register an interest. So look out for information on this exciting development and opportunity for the community.

Ashurst Wood



Parish Council

Newsletter Autumn 2008



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I start with an apology, due to problems encountered with distribution it has been a while since the last newsletter although the Parish Council does have regular monthly bulletins in the church's Parish News and via Email to those residents who have registered their email address with the Parish Clerk. For those people who wish to receive a monthly e-newsletter please send your email address to Susan Wellerd at "clerk@ashurstwoodparishcouncil.gov.uk" The staff and members of the Parish Council have been very busy on your behalf during the past year trying to overcome many obstacles in order to progress those objectives that you told us you wanted for the village and as set out in the Village Plan. We were very pleased that the hard work of the various volunteers in the community was recognised by being awarded runner up in the Calor Village of the Year competition, it's no mean feat to come second in the whole of West Sussex!

As a Council we have to be ever vigilant to protect the quality of life that we are all lucky enough to enjoy. To this end the Council reviews many documents from various central and local government departments and makes appropriate representations. An example of this is to be found in Cllr. Jenny Forbes article on the Core Strategy on the back page of this newsletter.

Also on the back page you will read that we are making good progress in regards to the provision of some affordable homes in the village, and we hope to report some more news on this in the near future.

As always there is a great need for volunteers (e.g. drivers for the shopping bus, neighbourhood watch, speedwatch, the summer fair and the conservation group). If you can help in any way, please contact Susan Wellerd on 01342 823770. Finally, I would draw your attention to the Parish Council budget proposals for next year as set out below. We have tried to keep a tight rein on expenditure and despite the fact that we have budgeted to purchase the Village Centre from the Diocese of Chichester we are only increasing the precept, on average by the equivalent of 4p per week per household. Although rather early I do wish you all a very peaceful Christmas and a healthy and happy 2009

Don Sinclair

Parish Council Budget proposals for 2009/ 10

At the meeting to be held on 2nd December 2008 the Council will approve the Budget and precept for 2009/10. (The precept is the money used to run the Council and is raised as part of the Council tax) the proposal and detailed figures for each type of expenditure is available on the Parish Council Website or as a paper copy from the office at the side of St. Dunstan's Church. Comments from residents are very welcome and if possible should be received in advance of the meeting on 2nd December. The proposal is for a precept of £36,400 up from £35,000. One of the principal reasons for the increase is to enable the Council to purchase the Village Centre from the Diocese of Chichester and protect it for the community. The plan is for the running of the facility to continue in the very capable hands of the current trustees so there will not be any noticeable changes. Currently the value of the property is being evaluated and hopefully will be agreed before Christmas, allowing the purchase to take place in the new financial year. The Council will continue to keep you updated via newsletters, its annual report and for those of you with internet the newsletter and website.

Train times change from 14th December: Southern are making significant changes to train times throughout their franchise area with effect from Sunday 14th December. For East Grinstead travellers the changes mainly affect the morning and evening peak periods. In the mornings many times are slightly altered and there is an additional train to Victoria at 07 :23. In the evenings there is the biggest change, with the standard xx.23 and xx.53 from Victoria departure slots carrying on throughout the peak period. These are supplemented by four trains from London Bridge between 17 :00 and 19: 00. The overall number of evening peak trains remains the same, with Victoria gaining one and London Bridge losing one. Trains at other times are largely unaffected although there are some minor adjustments. Full details will be available at stations and on the website www.southernrailway.com soon. We are updating our "Travel Connections" information and this will be placed on the Parish Council website.

Chairman's Report
October 2008

The main challenge this year has been the weather – with blustery winds, torrential rain and flurries of snow, but in true British form we took it all in our stride. We have had our 1st Christmas jolly – but due to the weather we ended up in the garage drinking mulled wine and eating mince pies.

The "Old Cellar's" are slowly coming back to life – still a long way to go – but better than it was 2 years ago. The logs will be shared out to those volunteers that have asked, just waiting for the farmer to give the OK. We have made a few 'bug piles' hopefully we might get some Stag Beetles. Wait and see. John Pears Field has had its wild flower seeds sown and whips planted – some of the seeds have flowered. The wild flower area was then cut, rowed/raked and then all cut matter removed and left staked high as a habitat for the reptiles and mammals. Due to the weather it was a hard task day but due to our fantastic volunteers completed in one day. Everyone was shattered when they left " didn't they do well."

In April we had our 1st litter pick – but again due to the weather (this time snow) however...." If at first you don't succeed try again." and we did, we filled 6 black sacks – 4 of which were recycled. The litter pick was in conjunction with the Parish Council. We are planning to repeat this next year – on a Sunday afternoon and hopefully it will become a regular event.

The bird walk was a huge success -33 birds were either seen and/or heard ending with a real treat – a nest box with a camera showing a pair of Blue Tits sitting on 8 eggs.

The path clearance this year was at the Old Cellars and has resulted in villagers who walk that way not getting scratched or stung anymore –unfortunately due to the weather the nettles are back.

The Survey of the wild flower area on John Pears field was a disaster. As a group this isn't working – if people wish to do this on their own then please talk to me.

We had a grant from Mid Sussex District Council for 5 wooden rakes, the native wild flower seeds and 75 whips (a mixture of Field Maple, Hornbeam, Hawthorne – 25 of each) .

The Parish Council has paid for Ceri Evans, our tools officer, to go on a 1st aid course. But this doesn't mean he wants to put into practice what he has learnt!

We still need more members – please help to spread the word – you don't have to volunteer to make a difference. The cash helps!! Current membership is only £3 per year.

Angie Jones our secretary has had to step down due to work commitments. Thankfully Catherine Watkins has stepped up and taken over the reins. Thank you Angie for all your hard work.

I thank my team members Catherine, Jona, Ceri and Ian for all the work that they put in to make it easier for our task days to go smoothly.

Thank you to Susan Wellerd our Parish Clerk and our Parish Council for their continued support and help.

To Mike Funnell - WSCC Countryside Ranger and Vanessa Head - MSDC Park Ranger - thank you. But the biggest thank you is to you, the volunteers who come out to play, weather permitting! Once a month and is making a difference within our village. THANK YOU

Tanya Hayman

And a big Thank-you to Tanya for being the driving force behind the Conservation Group in Ashurst Wood . Editor.

Neighbourhood Watch

Over the past year the membership of Neighbourhood Watch has increased to an extent that most areas of the village are now covered by a street coordinator.

We still have much to do to ensure that all areas in the village are covered and we are desperately seeking to recruit more members to help us achieve this aim.

Being a member of NHW simply means taking sensible precautions to protect your property, look out for your neighbours, especially if they are elderly or live alone. Pass relevant information about crime to the police.

It is also useful to get to know our local Police Community Support Officer, George Lock, who is most approachable and effective.

Discuss any concerns you might have with your street coordinator who will assist you in deciding what action should be taken.

Peter Melody. October 2008.

ASHURST WOOD SUMMER FAIR 2009

By popular demand an Ashurst Wood Village Fair for 2009 is in an advanced stage of planning.

Many of you will remember the Strawberry Fairs that were so successful up to a few years ago. When the Village Plan was prepared a lot of you said you would like to see this (or something similar) back.

A Steering Group has been hard at work coming up with ideas and making bookings. There will be a fair with lots to do for all ages in the afternoon and a Hog Roast with live band in the evening.

The Primary School, the Church and the Community Pre-School are all heavily involved in the planning along with a small number of residents who have been keen to get involved simply because they see this as an opportunity to create a great fun day bringing the whole village together. The whole event is being organised under the auspices of the Parish Council.

More information as we get nearer the day but, in the meantime, make sure you have the date in your diary - **Saturday 20 June.** And if you hear of anyone else starting to organise an event on this day please encourage them to look for another date!

It is not too late to get involved in the planning and organisation of the event so if you would like to help please do give Keith Stacey a ring on 323880 or email him at keith@keithandwendy.net.

YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS ARE:

Chairman:	
Don Sinclair,	824317
Vice Chair:	
Jenny Forbes,	822769
Councillors:	
Ian Arnott,	822555
Michael Box,	822664
Paul Bridgland,	822068
Alan Del Mar,	823196
Malcolm Elliott,	324474
Brian Phillips,	824154
Jonathan Samways,	322226

PARISH COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Public Services
Chairman: Alan Del Mar

Planning
Chair: Jenny Forbes

John Pears Management
Chairman : to be decided

PARISH CLERK

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