

Community Voice

A welcome from the new Chairman

As you may have realised Buxted Parish Council has a new chairman. I took over, rather unexpectedly in October. I have lived in Buxted for over 30 years and have seen many changes in the village. As I live on the far southern borders of the Parish I decided to become involved several years ago because I felt that sometimes people living on the outskirts are less well represented than people who live within our villages. I have a background in environmental and historical issues and policy and feel very strongly about trying to

do our best, as a Parish Council, to look after that important part of our landscape whilst having to accommodate the increasing pressures of housing and its associated infrastructure.

As I am a relative newcomer to the Parish Council, I am relying heavily on those on the Parish Council with more experience and the invaluable assistance of our two clerks. I am keen on making the Parish Council approachable to all those we represent. Please come to Parish Council meetings to see how hard we work on your behalf.

Vivienne Blandford, PC Chairman

Contents

Chairman's welcome	1
Tree planted in memory	1
Alison Crowe	2
Winter matters	2
New playground	3
Roundabout	3
Parking issues	4
Pig syndicate	4
Rail links	4
Power of Wellbeing	5
Buxted Community Hall Trust	6
Local councillors	7
Meetings	8

Tree planted in memory of the late James Chalmers

On a lovely sunny warm late autumn morning we planted an Indian Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus indica*) at Pound Green to replace the Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) that had been removed earlier because it was diseased and dying. The tree was planted in memory of James Chalmers, a long-standing resident of Buxted who served for 24 years on the Parish Council and as its chairman for 10 of those 24 years.

This tree was planted, with the help of Maureen Chalmers, widow of James, whilst a group of local residents and some members of the Parish Council looked on. A very suitable toast, of mulled cider, was drunk to James. It was a very relaxed and friendly ceremony.

We are hoping to repair the railings and a plaque to James will be put on the renovated railings in due course.

I am sure you will have noticed the effect that this late, dry warm autumn is having on the trees and plants, with some trees in full leaf and some plants being tricked into thinking it is spring-time. The chestnut is sporting some very fine sticky buds, I hope we get some cold weather soon and they stay closed.



Maureen Chalmers and Vivienne Blandford plant the new tree.

Alison Crowe – Chairman 2001 to 2011

Alison has been a long serving Parish Council Member — the span lost in the mists of my foggy memory. When I began with the Council I was amazed at how much time James Chalmers spent ploughing through the incoming documents and getting on top of the various topics. When Alison became Chairman in 2001 she made it clear that she was neither willing nor free to do quite so much — and then proceeded to do precisely that!

With Alison I have been to many meetings with Developers, Architects, County Councillors and Wealden Councillors and Officials — and every time Alison has been well briefed and has fought ferociously for Buxted. My wife was in the Hall during our Parish Meeting at Buxted School when the unknown lady sitting next to her said 'That's Alison Crowe — aren't we lucky'.

Buxted has been lucky to have a leader who fought for the best outcome in the Wealden and Buxted Statutory Plans and in getting the best possible outcome for the Grampian site in Five Ash Down and the Church Road site in Buxted. Often she was bitterly disappointed when the result was less than perfect, but her insistence and passion gained a lot of respect in Wealden DC and East Sussex CC and they know they cannot disregard our Parish lightly. We nearly got away with having traffic lights instead of a roundabout in Buxted High Street.

The realisation of the Health Centre and the prospective Village Hall on the Basil Ionides site as the new Centre of Buxted was Alison's deeply felt dream and passion. All this was done whilst



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running a business and coping with the trials of life. I know the Council can eat up time and I often had to shuffle my feet and divert my eyes when volunteers were called for. Alison was constantly on call.

I have probably left much unsaid, indeed our clerks, Beccy and Malcolm, undoubtedly know more than anyone how hard Alison worked during her term in office.

I think there is a message here. We have two excellent professional Clerks whom we must rely on more to sift out the important issues for our attention, as we all support Vivienne Blandford as our new Chairman.

Geoffrey Sheard, Chairman of Planning Committee

Winter matters

After an exceptionally mild and dry autumn, who knows what the winter has in store for us — hopefully not a repeat of last year's snow and ice! East Sussex County Council Highways, as the body responsible for keeping designated roads as clear from snow and ice as possible, has compiled a comprehensive but very readable summary of its responsibilities and policies for the coming winter. This includes sections on clearing snow and ice from pavements, grit bins and one called Facts, Figures and Myths. The article is too long to include here, but we hope to reproduce it in full on our web site.

The onset of winter may also bring another problem to a rural parish such as ours — the theft of heating oil. Apparently the preferred *modus operandi* is to use a Transit type van with an oil tank fitted in the cargo area. These thefts are notoriously difficult for the Police to investigate, but it is possible to put a dye into the oil so at least if a heavily laden Transit is stopped by the Police and has heating oil in a tank then the dye can show it to be stolen. We also believe it is possible to fit an alarm that is triggered by any sudden drop in tank volume. This would alert you to an ongoing theft and also any unexpected loss through leakage.

Talking of Swings.....

The playground has been successfully re-located. The new spinning disc, chosen by the youth council, who then successfully bid for funding to pay for the equipment, has been popular and is obviously appreciated by the younger members of the community. The older play apparatus is now in need of rubbing down and repainting to protect it from rust and rot. The trustees plan for this work to take place in March 2012.

Some residents have asked when the picnic benches which were located beside the former playground will be re-instated. The benches have been safely stored and will be positioned once the Surgery build and landscaping is complete.

The Ionides Trust has come up with a splendid plan for the area between the site of the new health centre



and the Buxted Recreation Ground. The health centre builders have an unexpected quantity of topsoil and by removing some of the hedgerow between the sites it will be possible to grass the area. This will be done at no cost and will expand the available open space for the benefit of everyone. The oak trees in this area will not be touched.

.....and Roundabouts

Buxted Parish Council is aware of the current problems with regards to the roundabout and lighting, as part of the new development at the end of Framfield Road. However, East Sussex County Council Highways advice states that the roundabout surface is temporary, and will be finalised once the public utility services beneath the carriageway have been implemented. It was also confirmed that in order to enable the roundabout dome to be more conspicuous to drivers, the final surface of the dome will be raised in its centre. Please also be aware that once the works have been completed, an independent safety audit will take place to ensure that the scheme conforms to Highway Safety Standards. Should the auditor find any potential safety hazards with any facet of the scheme then the developer/ESCC will be required to rectify this.

It is worth looking at the roundabout in the context of the overall development of the new housing site. Development in Buxted was inevitably in line with the South–East Development Plan and Wealden Core Strategy. Buxted Parish Council did its best to keep any development to a minimum and, where possible, to help make sure the style and type of housing fitted into the local environment. Without these efforts, a bigger and more urban development would have been planned. This could have included street lighting and may also have included inappropriate fences and general street clutter. Many meetings were held with both the Planners and the Developers to make the local wishes heard and work towards the best possible outcome under



circumstances that the Parish Council was unable to control, but at least was able to contribute to the final plan. The residents of Buxted Parish were given every opportunity to make their objections known and heard by the right people.

With regard to the inevitable new road layout, the Parish Council argued strongly in favour of traffic lights with a pedestrian crossing facility and with minimum street lighting; however, there were some members of the community who would have preferred a roundabout during these initial stages. The Parish Council went so far as to appoint a traffic consultant in order to assist them in these endeavours and a strong case for traffic lights at the junction was made. Subsequently it was an independent highways assessment that advised that a roundabout would be the preferred and safer option with less disruption to the traffic flow. The developers at the time were prepared to take expert

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

advice and not the cheaper option. The Parish Council still wished to see traffic lights at this junction, but having made our point as strenuously as possible there was nothing we could do in the light of Highway Authority opinion being the decision-making body on highway matters. It was the view of the Highway Authority that one of the main problems with traffic lights was the location of traffic lights on Framfield Road and whether a large vehicle could turn right into the road if there was another large vehicle waiting at the lights to exit Framfield Road. It was also considered that cars speed up when travelling towards a changing traffic light. These were amongst some of the deciding factors.

No-one likes change, but this is something that has been happening over many years as those residents who have lived here a considerable time would be able to tell us. However we must accept these changes, many of which are for the better, some we do not like but we may have to learn to accept them with a good grace and accept that the Parish Council did its utmost throughout the decision-making process to represent its community to try to provide the best possible outcome.

Framfield Road and Gordon Road parking

The Parish Council was planning to ask local residents to see if there was any interest in getting involved with finding solutions to the problems of Framfield and Gordon Road parking. Given the construction work on the roundabout and the new health centre, it is thought best to allow these works to be finished and parking routines to settle down before looking at this issue again in the Spring.

Allotments and pig syndicate

The allotments have been very productive this year and there are several new allotment holders. One or two sites have not been maintained as they should and have become weed infested and the Parish Council used a contractor to cut down the worst. Hopefully those people holding such plots will be better placed to maintain them next year. The Parish Council does have the power to evict tenants who do not manage their plots, but it is reluctant to be too heavy handed as there can often be personal circumstances that cause temporary difficulties. There is a very small waiting list for plots, so if you are interested, just send your details to the Clerk.

The Council decided in the summer that it would not open up a Parish Council-owned field in Burnt Oak Lane, High Hurstwood for allotments. The field is currently rented out for grazing. Demand for additional allotment sites in High Hurstwood did not seem very great and there was much opposition from neighbours of the site with particular concerns over traffic and parking. If there is strong demand for additional sites within the parish then the Council would look favourably at investing in additional sites in Buxted.

Lewes/Uckfield rail link and Brighton main line 2(BML2)

Following the July Parish Council meeting at which Ian Smith and Duncan Bennett of the Uckfield Railway Line Parish Liaison Committee addressed the Parish Council, a resolution to support the Brighton main line 2 (BML2) campaign was discussed and a majority approved the following resolution at the September Parish Council.

Buxted Parish Council

- Notes with pleasure the continuing increase in usage of the Uckfield Railway Line, but also notes, particularly for commuters, the service has become a victim of its own success, with complaints of over-crowding and a lack of adequate associated infrastructure, including parking at stations such as Buxted and Uckfield.
- Believes that the current service could be improved and expanded if holistically the route is upgraded, including the possibility of some or all of the following options — double tracking,

electrification and improved supporting infrastructure, such as parking at Buxted, Uckfield and other stations en route.

- Acknowledges the benefits to the local economy and to local residents that are likely to derive from improved transport links in the area, provided that the necessary associated infrastructure is included in such plans. The potential development of BML2 as one of these improvements is supported.

Some councillors expressed concern over possible impacts of upgrading the transport links which would include infrastructure, housing, *etc*, some of which may be unwelcome. Whether either of the line developments will ever happen is a moot point. Questions about the future of the railway developments in this area, including the capacity of the London to Brighton line, the key strategic driver behind the campaign, were discussed in the House of Lords on 6th October. Earl Attlee said the Government 'did not think that the route (which includes BML2) will need to be opened within the next 20 years'.

Power of Wellbeing

Parish councils have 'duties' — things they must do — and 'powers' — things that they are allowed to do if they so wish. All of these are defined by a myriad of laws. A much broader 'power' is available, provided parish councils meet the necessary criteria and this is called the Power of Wellbeing and allows the Council to take action if it promotes or improves the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. The criteria that a Parish Council needs to meet to take on this power are to have a qualified parish clerk, at least two-thirds of vacancies on the council were filled at the last election, 80% of councillors have undertaken training in the use of the power and it has published a Statement of Intent as to community engagement. Buxted has met the first three conditions for some time and has now drawn up the Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement. This is published below and at the Parish Council meeting in December the Council will formally resolve to adopt the Power of Wellbeing.

Buxted Parish Council – Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement

Aims and objectives:

The Parish Council only exists to serve the community it represents and which has elected its members to office. Without understanding the needs and aspirations of the community, the Parish Council cannot hope to function effectively and deliver outcomes that benefit the community and are valued and appreciated by the community. By engaging effectively with the community at every level — by hamlet, by age group, by gender, by community groups, *etc* — the Parish Council can position itself to deliver benefits to the community that are valued and wanted by the community.

Defining the community:

Buxted Parish Council is keen to reach all groups and individuals who work, or live in the area and wishes to ensure that as wide a cross-section of the community as possible can have access to the Council and its services.

The Parish Council will:

- Engage with the younger members of the community through the active encouragement and support of Buxted Youth Council. No decisions that affect young people will be made without reference to this group, which will also receive funding from the Parish Council.
- Support the Buxted Community Hall Trust as it embarks on the challenging task of fundraising to provide a new community hall. Support will be practical, moral and financial.
- Support all community groups where possible. Grant funding is available through the Parish Council's small grants scheme as well as other donations already made annually.

The Parish Council will make the Reading Room available to community groups at modest rent.

Provision of information to the community:

The Parish Council will:

- Publish agendas for all meetings on notice boards in Buxted, High Hurstwood and Five Ash Down, as well as on the Parish Council website in advance of the next meeting.
- Publish minutes of all meetings of the Parish Council and its committees on its website.
- Publish and distribute to every house in the community a newsletter, *Community Voice*, at regular intervals, normally every three or four months.
- Write a brief article giving an update on Parish Council matters for publication in the monthly Buxted Messenger

and High Hurstwood Parish Church magazine.

- The Annual Report will be made available on the Parish Council website and form the cornerstone of the Annual Assembly.
- Make available documentation, minutes, papers, *etc*, in accordance with Freedom of Information Act requirements at minimal or no cost to applicants.

Opportunities for community involvement:

The Parish Council will

- Ensure the Clerk holds a weekly 'surgery' for parishioners in the Reading Room or other appropriate community building.
- Ensure the website continues to provide a facility for emails to be sent direct to the Clerk.
- Encourage members of the public to attend the annual Parish Council assembly as well as the regular Parish Council and committee meetings at which the public are allowed to speak.
- Enable opportunities for formal representation to council by letter or email.
- Hold public meetings on specific matters of importance as required.

Involvement in partnerships:

The Parish Council will engage and work in partnership with East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, the Buxted Youth Council, the Buxted Community Hall Trust and the Basil Ionides Trust, as well as other organisations as appropriate and necessary.

Role of council members and officers:

Members will be active in the community and their contact details will be widely available on notice boards, the Parish Council website, *etc*, so they are accessible to the community.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

The Clerks will be available to deal with members of the public by post, phone and email during normal working hours, and in person at the weekly 'surgery' or by specific appointment.

Role of Council Members and Officers

Council Members (parish councillors) are the elected decision makers of the Parish Council. Their contact details are available on Parish Council notice boards and on the Parish Council website. Members of the public are welcome to contact councillors to raise any issues. Parish councillors are appointed as formal representatives to a number of outside bodies both within and outwith the Parish.

Council Officers (Clerks) are staff employed to carry out the day-to-day functions of the Parish Council and make sure that its services are provided for the local community. The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer for the Parish Council which means he has overall responsibility for the provision of Parish Council services.

Specific areas for community involvement:

Areas where the Parish Council expects to involve the community through consultation, *etc*, include the following:

- The new community hall project;
- The Localism Bill and what it means for Buxted;
- Wealden District Council's emerging Core Strategy;
- Parking issues in Buxted.

This Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement will be reviewed annually.

Buxted Community Hall Trust

Since the last *Community Voice* in July, the project has moved forward, albeit more slowly than we would have liked. A planning application was submitted by the PC on our behalf to Wealden District Council in August. The consultation part of the planning process is at last underway and we hope to hear the outcome in the next few weeks.

At the end of the summer meetings held with Buxted Scouts' leaders, they generously agreed to accept the idea of a change in the land leased to them by the Ionides Trust so that the new Community Hall will fit neatly between the Scout Hut and the newly resited children's playground. We thank them for their co-operation in this matter.

Fund Raising Activities

We were fortunate to be one of the first local charities to be supported by the new **Waitrose** store in Uckfield. The shop shared £1000 between three worthy causes. The Trust received £239.

On October 22nd we held a Bring and Buy sale. This raised over £400. We thank the Women's Institute members who made this event a success. The event raised the profile of the project in the village and indirectly helped us to find a volunteer to act as assistant Treasurer. Posters designed by the children of Buxted C of E Primary School were on display at the sale. Rea Sanderson won first prize. Poppy Picken, Zoe Mattelea, India Raynor-Phillips and Grace Bradley were awarded highly commended certificates.

Once we have secured planning permission, fundraising activities will start in earnest and a number of events are being planned.

One of these is a **major village event to mark the Queen's Jubilee in June**. We hope it will be enjoyed and supported by everyone. If you or your group is willing to play a part in organising this event, please let us know.

EasyFundraising.org.uk

You can help raise money for the new hall by clicking on www.easyfundraising.org.uk whenever you shop on line.

Please try it out, it only takes a few seconds and each purchase you make contributes a sum to the Trust, **with no cost to you**. Over a year these small sums donated by the retailers could amount to a significant total towards the Community Hall project.

Website and Logo

Over the next few weeks keep an eye open for our dedicated website and new logo for the hall project. Grateful thanks are due to Jörn Kroegel, Tim Browne and Richard Georgiou for their technical and design assistance. The website will show upcoming fundraising activities, latest news and running total. There will also be links to Paypal and easyfundraising.org.uk to make donating easier and secure.

Not everyone has access to the Internet so forthcoming events will continue to be publicised in the Buxted Messenger, BPEC and the usual posters in the village.

Please Help

We would welcome your help on whatever scale you can offer for our community. If you have any questions or would like to help please contact:

Nick Tricker Tel. 01825 733018
chairman@buxtedcommunityhall.org.uk

George Claydon Tel. 01825 731957
treasurer@buxtedcommunityhall.org.uk

Sheila Bartholomew Tel. 01825 733100
secretary@buxtedcommunityhall.org.uk

Contact your local councillor

Name	Address	Phone/ Fax	email
Vivienne Blandford <i>Chairman</i>	Greenbank, Shepherds Hill Buxted, TN22 4PX	01825 890372	vivienne@blandford.co.uk
Michelle Warner <i>Vice-Chairman and High Hurstwood Ward Chairman</i>	2 Parkhurst Cottages Perrymans Lane High Hurstwood TN22 4AG	01825 733210 01825 732419 fax	michelle.warner99@gmail.com
Marjan Arabizadeah	23 Littlewood Lane, Buxted, TN22 4LW	01825 733989	marjan4@tiscali.co.uk
Alison Crowe	Old Popeswood Cottage, Limes Lane, Buxted, TN22 4PB	01825 732752 01825 732065 fax	alison@corvuscom.com
Maggie Dopson	Springfield, Five Ash Down TN22 3AH	01825 733441 01825 732278 (FAD PO)	mags@heritagebs.co.uk
Martin Hall <i>Buxted Ward Chairman</i>	Birchcroft, Limes Lane, Buxted, TN22 4PA	01825 732212	fionaandmartin@btinternet.com
Francis Harding	Ambleside, Court Lane, Five Ash Down, TN22 3AG	01825 733493	f.b.harding@btinternet.com
Graham Manchester	Willow Lodge, Fowley Lane, High Hurstwood, TN22 4BG	01825 733867	g.manchester@btconnect.com
John Rose	Sunset Farm, Cross in Hand, Heathfield, TN21 0TX	01435 865920 01825 733579 (Shop fax)	john@georgerose.co.uk
Katie Seddon	5 Higglers Close, Buxted, TN22 4HE	01825 732572	katieseddon@aol.com
Geoffrey Sheard	Shadwell Farm, Chillies Lane, High Hurstwood, TN22 4AB	01825 733110	oliphant@mistral.co.uk
Vi Treacher	Cobbetts, Burnt Oak Road, High Hurstwood, TN22 4AE	01825 732575	
CLERKS Beccy Macklen and Malcolm Wilson	PO Box 202, Heathfield, TN21 1BN	01435 812757	clerk@buxtedparish.org.uk
ESCC Anthony Reid	Millbrook Farm, Nutley TN22 3PJ	01825 712242	dlr.anthony.reid@eastsussex.gov.uk
WDC Norman Buck	Spindles, Howbourne Lane, Buxted TN22 4QB	01825 733191 /732208	nadbuck@howbourne.co.uk
Ken Ogden	The Mill House, London Road, Maresfield TN22 2ED	01825 761433	ken@ogden.eclipse.co.uk

Parish Councillor Areas of Responsibility – full council

	Councillor
Buxted	
1 Gordon Road, Framfield Road, Tanyards Cottages	Cllr Katie Seddon
2 Etchingwood, Limes Lane, Shepherds Hill, Nan Tucks Lane	Cllr Vivienne Blandford
3 High Street – west, Station Road, Britts Farm and Orchard, Littlewood Lane	Cllr Marjan Arabizadeh
4 Church Road, Park View, Nursery Field, St. Mary's Garth, St. Mary's Mead	Cllrs Marjan Arabizadeh and Martin Hall
5 High Street – east, Eight Bells Close, Plovers Barrow, St. Raphaels	Cllr Martin Hall
6 Pound Green, Spotted Cow Lane, Redbrook Lane, Howbourne Lane, Buxted Wood Lane	Cllr Vivienne Blandford
Five Ash Down & Coopers Green	
7 Coopers Green – east of traffic lights, Lephams Bridge, Budletts, Ringles Cross, Buxted Park	Cllr Maggie Dopson
8 Five Ash Down, Coopers Green – west of traffic lights, Millwood Lane and Close, Donkey Lane	Cllr Francis Harding
9 Flaxen Fields, Ashengate Way	Cllrs Maggie Dopson and Francis Harding
High Hurstwood	
10 Fowley Lane, Hurstwood Road (HH & Buxted)	Cllr Graham Manchester
11 Burnt Oak Road	Cllr Geoffrey Sheard
12 Perrymans Lane, Herons Ghyll, Chillies Lane, Poundgate	Cllr Michelle Warner
13 Royal Oak Lane, Maypole Cottages, Cherry Garden Cottages	Cllrs Michelle Warner and Vi Treacher
14 Rocks Lane	Cllr Geoffrey Sheard

Parish Council Meetings 2012

Full PC meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month, except August. They begin at 19.30. Agendas are displayed on the Parish notice boards and at www.buxted-parish.org.uk. Everyone is welcome to attend but please check time and venue.

January 10	Buxted Reading Room	19.30
February 14	High Hurstwood Village Hall	19.30
March 13	Buxted Reading Room	19.30
April 10	High Hurstwood Village Hall	19.30
May 8	Buxted Reading Room	19.30

Buxted Parish website

www.buxtedparish.org.uk

Local information at your fingertips

Planning Meetings 2012

Everyone is welcome to attend but please check time and venue.

January 10	Buxted Reading Room	19.00
January 24	Buxted Reading Room	19.30
February 14	High Hurstwood Village Hall	19.00
February 28	Buxted Reading Room	19.30
March 13	Buxted Reading Room	19.00
March 27	Buxted Reading Room	19.30
April 10	High Hurstwood Village Hall	19.00
April 24	High Hurstwood Village Hall	19.30
May 8	Buxted Reading Room	19.00
May 22	Buxted Reading Room	19.30
June 12	Buxted Reading Room	19.00
June 26	Buxted Reading Room	19.30