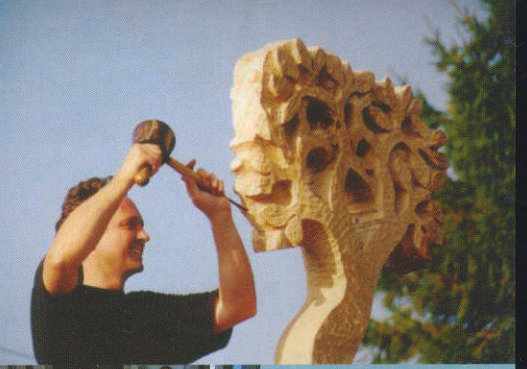




Buxted Parish Plan 2006

Including the villages of
Buxted, Five Ash Down and
High Hurstwood





BUXTED PARISH PLAN 2006



OUR PARISH

Buxted Parish, with the main village areas of Buxted, Five Ash Down and High Hurstwood, is situated largely in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty between the North and South Downs. The Weald was originally an area of land between two lines of chalk hills called the North and South Downs. Weald is an old English word for "forest" and this area across Kent and Sussex included Ashdown, Tilgate and St. Leonard's forests which still remain today. Uckfield and Crowborough are the nearest market towns.

The village of Buxted sits astride the main Sussex east-west trunk road, the A272, the London to Uckfield railway line, and the River Uck. Five Ash Down and High Hurstwood are a few miles to the west and north west respectively. Depending on your point of view, we are either in the middle of nowhere, or in the middle of everywhere! The Parish has good access to the larger towns of Brighton, Eastbourne, and Tunbridge Wells. An outline of the Parish is shown to the left.

Buxted is one of the names that indicate the character of the Weald - it means 'place of beeches' - and like so much of Wealden is still heavily wooded.

Buxted Parish has had a long and interesting history and has been an important region of Sussex over many centuries, most notably perhaps in the 16th and 17th centu-

ries as a centre for iron and cannon manufacturing, as well as charcoal firing. In the last century, with the arrival of the railway line, Buxted became an important centre for the poultry and egg industry — providing food for London.

Buxted Parish is still a rural community with a population of approximately 3,300. We enjoy the beautiful High Weald countryside with numerous public footpaths, some of which are nationally recognised long-distance footpaths. The Weald Way passes through Five Ash Down and Buxted Park, and the Vanguard Way also runs through the Parish. Ashdown Forest, which covers an area of some 14,000 acres, directly abuts the northern end of the Parish. These areas all have a wide variety of interesting flora and fauna, and deer roam freely throughout the Parish.

Parish Plans

Buxted Parish Council initiated the Parish Plan in November 2003.

Parish Plans are part of a Government-sponsored initiative to help breathe new life into rural communities, and enable local people to develop their own neighbourhoods in the way they want.

Key to the project was that every person living or working in the community would have the opportunity to have a say - from the very young to the very old. Every household received a copy of the questionnaire that helped shape this document, and receives a copy of the Parish Plan.

The completed Plan will inform policy and direction and provide concrete evidence to support local initiatives, applications for grants, planning issues and much more.



OK let me get this straight — so the Plan is to move the village back up here where it used to be and to move the big house to Uckfield — right?

Parish Plans have had a considerable beneficial impact in many other communities already and this was one of the factors which encouraged the Parish Council to embark on this considerable undertaking.

Our Parish Plan—the Process

After a very well attended initial public meeting held at the Buxted C of E Primary School on 26th November 2003 a Parish Plan Committee was formed, which included broad representation from across the Parish. To survey the whole Parish to get a view of the needs and priorities, Village Work Groups fleshed out key issues to be included in a Survey questionnaire

The Survey thus developed by the Parish Plan Committee was divided into ten sections:-

- 1 Household Information (Demographics)
- to provide a context for the analysis.
- 2 Parish Services / Facilities / Communications
- 3 Law and Order / Community Safety
- 4 Housing, Planning and Development
- 5 Travel, Transport and Traffic
- 6 Environmental Considerations and Services
- 7 Business and Employment
- 8 Leisure
- 9 Young Person's Questionnaire
- 10 Contact information for 'would be' Volunteers.

The issues in each section were identified by our keen group of public spirited volunteers in the Work Groups, and through various public meetings and other canvassing.

The Survey forms, which ran to 10 pages and included 160 questions, were not identifiable, and therefore the information was not directly attributable to respondents.

Over 1200 forms were sent out — one to every household, and business throughout the Parish. They were also made available in various public locations. By September 2004, 418 completed forms had been returned. This is equivalent to 35%, which is considered a good return rate in the world of surveys.

The processing of the resulting data was considerable and would not have been accomplished without the assistance of Uckfield Community College 6th Form Students. However, all the data, some 67,000 fields, was finally entered into a database by the end of January 2005—ready for analysis.

An initial report of the analysis was completed by the end of March 2005 — filled with graphs and statistics, and running to 52 pages. This essential statistical data is not included in this narrative summary, but is available on request from the Parish Clerk and can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.buxtedparish.org.uk>.

The analysis was made available for consultation at public displays in our three Village Halls during April 2005 to garner any further community input.

The original Parish Plan Committee stepped down at this time as planned, and the task of writing and implementing the 'Plan' was handed back to the Parish Council - with the aim of engaging the local community once more after publication and during the implementation process.

This summary report will be used to develop various action plans and activities over the coming years. We hope you find it interesting reading.

Our Parish Plan — Survey Summary

1 Demographics

Response rates broadly reflected the populations of the villages as given by the Electoral Roll - i.e. all communities responded equally enthusiastically, and so the survey could be said to be equally representative of the three villages.

The population (of respondents) is relatively mature and stable, with a majority of residents in the age group 45-65, a significant number being retired and having lived here for more than 20 years. Of the only slightly fewer in full time employment, almost half are self employed - a somewhat surprising result.

This then supports the statistic about commuting, which says the vast majority of respondents don't commute anywhere!

On the subject of vehicles - amazingly some people have up to 30 vehicles, but the vast majority have between 1 and 3, of which a small number are vans or larger.

Although most respondents felt they had adequate off-road parking, there are a significant number who do not, and increasingly we are seeing the effects of this every day - particularly in some parts of the Parish.

2 Parish Services / Communications

A large percentage of the population would like to have a Parish / Village News Sheet - and coincidentally almost exactly the same percentage would not be prepared to help or contribute! Currently the more traditional modes of communication are preferred to electronic communications such as the Parish website and BPeC (Buxted Parish e Community).

A surprisingly large number of people claim to have attended a Parish Council meeting, although public attendance at the monthly meetings does not attest to this.

People's overall view of the Parish Council's (PC) performance seems satisfactory and slightly better than that of Wealden District Council (WDC).

There is a similar weighting when it comes to communicating issues from the PC and WDC, and there's room for improvement in both cases — something the PC, at least will work to address.

One thing it was hoped the Plan would show is the need for a new Community Centre / Parish Hall in Buxted and it is clear that the Buxtedians are not entirely satisfied with the current facilities — unlike the High Hurstwoodians who are very happy with their Village Hall.

There is a laudable desire for more Village and Community Events.

A very heartening and surpris-



ing finding was that 72% are in favour of a Parish Youth Council, which was also mirrored by significant number of positive responses in the Young Person's section of the Survey questionnaire.

The feedback from the questions about Post Offices, Dentists etc may influence how the PC treats planning applications or how it may push for a new community centre to include other facilities such as Banking, POs etc. It is believed we are very well served with Doctors but very poorly served with Dentists.

The Disaster Planning Section has identified the considerable number of people prepared to help in an emergency, and the resource they can provide. This is important in rural communities where increasingly there may be a need for us to help ourselves.

3 Law and Order

The Parish is not a high crime rate area, but the feeling from the Survey is that the crime there has been, has not been well dealt with by the Police

There is considerable concern over crime and a desire to see an increased Police presence even to the extent that a significant percentage (36%) would be prepared to contribute financially for a Community Support Officer - something in fact we all do already through our taxation. The PC cannot take direct action in this matter but this does give legitimacy and statistical support for the strenuous lobbying the PC undertakes to encourage improved rural policing.

When it comes to speeding, people believe that speed limits are not adhered to, and not enforced adequately by the Police. The PC will use this finding in ongoing lobbying. There was also considerable narrative comment in the comment fields about issues relating to pedestrians crossing the A272 in Buxted, and the dangerous Church Road intersection. This has been very useful in supporting actions the PC had already set in motion, namely 'the Crossing' itself, its position, and the 30mph limits in the village, but which became controversial in some parts of the community. The Survey very clearly demonstrates the PC has acted according to majority view — although the precise type of crossing may need to be reviewed after audit of the works done.

The Survey shows that the need to have speed limits changed is strongest in Buxted and this is something the PC already have underway, although extending the limits out to the school has yet to be achieved. In addition further measures are required in Five Ash Down.

One surprise was the strength of feeling about footpaths - particularly those adjoining the highways and the problem of rampant undergrowth. This is something the Footpaths Committee will be getting to grips with soon (probably literally) - so if you have an unruly hedge please do something about it before the PC or ESCC have to.

4 Housing, Planning and Development

Limiting future development in the Parish was by far the most important area of concern with over 1 in 3 highlighting this as a key area to protect the character and life of the community. Limiting the development boundary was repeatedly mentioned, as was resistance to demolition of existing buildings and insensitive infill. There were recurrent concerns about the pressure for urbanisation and requests for the villages to retain their separate identities as villages and not to become offshoots of Uckfield and Crowborough - or dormitories for commuters. Respondents felt there should be limited large scale (20+ houses) and particularly no further 'estate development'.

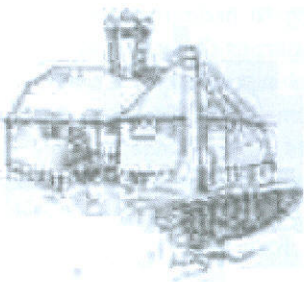
The need for strict planning control and tighter enforcement of planning was highlighted as important.

Whilst the community feels the planning and enforcement systems are adequate for protecting the environment, there is an issue over the lack of communication again. This is something the PC can directly influence.

- There is a strong preference for infill versus extending the village boundary.
- There is support for converting disused farm buildings.
- There is little support for 'no development whatsoever'.

Surprisingly there was not a strong call for additional business premises.

While the majority of respondents felt that there should be limited future development, 1 in 10 respondents noted that there was a need to accept some limited future evolution and expansion for the villages to be sustainable - though generally citing that this should not be before additional necessary infrastructure is in place.



Design of housing was mentioned repeatedly as being important to improve, particularly respecting local character and the rural environment - perhaps a reaction to recent developments in the Parish. The PC will address this through a Village Design Statement.

A need for some affordable homes was mentioned but of seemingly higher concern than affordable rented accommodation was the need for houses that young local families could afford to buy. The PC will use the Survey findings in ongoing discussions with WDC and in their input to the LDF (Local Development Framework) which will guide future development through to 2026.



Support for a local shop and indeed expansion of services to include a Post Office in Buxted,

Bring back our shops!

and Sunday opening were mentioned.

The need for an improved Doctor's surgery was also cited.

While encouragement to support local farming was mentioned by some respondents, acceptance of the current decline in farming was proposed as a reason to encourage cottage and light industry to replace it and make use of redundant buildings to provide local employment opportunities. Conversely some respondents cited issues with the road infrastructure making access for cars and lorries to some local businesses a problem to the community, and proposed that business should be largely confined to industrial estates in the nearby towns.

The need for a 'better heart' to the community was cited as an area of concern. A number of respondents posed there should be an improved community hall in Buxted - and the need for this to act as a centre for all ages was noted. An associated village green was also noted by a small number of respondents. This appears to relate in part to use of the Ionides Land - with some respondents noting that developing it just for a playground, thus far has been a missed opportunity. A small number of respondents suggested redevelopment of the hall at St Mary's to provide youth facilities in particular.

A number of respondents commented that parking on open land should be stopped - specifically parking on the grass verge opposite the garage in Five Ash Down. The PC is working to address this.



Who says there's too much traffic?

5 Travel, Transport and Traffic

As a statement of the obvious - most people felt the volume of traffic on the roads is too great, although 'we' are clearly not the culprits here, as the vast majority of our respondents make only 2-3 journeys per day.

Generally road signage is considered good, although there is an issue with signs being obscured by the local flora that needs addressing.

There were several specific Parking issues—most notably in Buxted around the Station, Reading Room, Doctor's Surgery, Framfield Road, and in High Hurstwood around the Maypole Inn. As we all know the Buxted problem has become considerably worsened since the improvements in the

Buxted train service, and the PC is already working with the local community to have the appropriate bodies address the problem.

The issue of 'Rat Runs' (aggravated in Buxted by those same train improvements, and the poor parking in Uckfield) causes great concern to local residents. The particular 'black spots' are Framfield Road in Buxted and Millwood Lane in Five Ash Down. Concern was also expressed about Chillies Lane, and Fowley Lane in High Hurstwood.

Most popular candidates for the title 'Single Most Important Traffic Problem' included the A272 and particularly its egress onto the Budletts Roundabout, the Church Road exit onto the A272 in Buxted and the Grampian Foods exit onto the A26.

On the issues relating to public transport, the PC has little direct control but the Survey data will be used primarily to inform our views when lobbying the authorities and when reviewing planning applications etc. Encouragingly some of the quoted reasons for not using public transport, such as later trains back from London and cleaner trains, have since been addressed by Southern Trains.

The PC does have representatives on the Parish Railway Consultative Committee and will feed back the contents of our Survey, particularly the suggestions to re-open the Lewes and Eridge Lines.

There was some support for a Community Bus. A group of local PCs are exploring an initiative here and this will help shape Buxted's contribution

6 Environmental Considerations

There was very nearly unanimous support for the better protection of the environment and countryside.

There was also a significant number (52%), who were prepared 'to put their money where their mouth was' by volun-

"Why on earth did we volunteer for this"



teering to support local working parties to maintain the environment. And what's more these intrepid souls actually volunteered their names and contact information.

Among specific issues identified were the protection of Buxted Park and the Ionides Land from development.

The questions on specific environmental issues showed up quantitatively the significance of:-

- The particular problem with drains and sewerage in Five Ash Down and Cooper's Green—which will be considerably alleviated with the closure of Grampian Foods, and this information will be used to inform the planning considerations on the redevelopment of the land.
- Flooding at the bottom of Buxted village.
- The obstruction of footpaths by rampant undergrowth, and the total lack of footpaths along some roads.
- The problems of noise and air pollution from Grampian Foods (now no more) and the issues around inappropriate traffic movements to industrial units in erstwhile farm premises.
- There was general satisfaction over refuse collection, and as 74% of us claim to recycle waste it wasn't a surprise to see that 69% of us wanted to see a separate collection of recyclable waste.

7 Business and Employment

There was rather an indifferent response to this section of the Survey with an indeterminate response as to whether people wanted more local business. If they did, it was of the service type, shops, butchers, post offices etc.

One third of respondents thought more local business would detract from the local environment, 13% owned a local business, 6% are currently employed locally, but significantly 30% wanted to be employed locally. Of the factors identified as limiting the establishment of local business, price and availability of property were not surprisingly foremost, with roads and transport coming next. A significant number of those supporting further development of business felt there should be less red tape and that the local planning authority should be more supportive. However, when asked if new housing developments should include provision for small business units the response was again indeterminate. The PC will have to investigate this further to help shape its policy in this area.

In answer to 'What more could be done to help and encourage small businesses' we heard

"Make planning and licences more speedily available - less red tape. More parking needed for cars and trucks. More shops needed to include a Post Office. Replace Wealden Council with young forward thinking people. More premises to be made available with suitable parking. Cut business rates and council tax. Businesses should be located so that increases in traffic do not affect the rural nature of the Parish. They should perhaps be agriculturally related and not detract from the countryside. Improve the infrastructure. Better public transport. More Parish advertising. A local directory listing all small businesses in the Parish."

The latter item is something the PC will assess and build on — perhaps through our website initially.

8 Leisure

About one third of respondents participate in local activities and an equal percentage know of the 35 or so societies and clubs we have already, and again the same percentage think they are adequately advertised. However, presumably that implies two thirds do not think they are adequately advertised. We could probably do a little more advertising here, and may use the planned Parish News Sheet as one vehicle for this, as well as the Parish website, and of course the Parish magazines.

Each of the three age groups — children, adult, and older generations — thought that on average we were well catered for with leisure activities.

Transport was however identified as an obstacle to participation, and so a Community Bus could be useful here.

Of the additional activities requested the following were oft cited:-

Cycle routes, bike/skate park, village green with a pond (public garden), swimming pool, golf, indoor bowling and tennis court.

Classes included; day time adult education classes, lecture and cinema groups, upholstery and dress making classes, book club, drama group, dance classes Latin, Tai Chi, walking groups, history and bridge.

Some of these do in fact already exist.

However, by far and away the vast majority (82%) of respondents just want to enjoy the countryside in their own way, by walking the local footpaths for example, and which in this context scored highly in terms of their suitability. The equestrians did not give a clear steer on what they felt, and the cyclists did not feel adequately catered for at all. 25% of respondents were willing to help assist with the above activities.

One issue that came up in this section and in section 6 in the context of footpaths, was the lack of access to local facilities, shops and businesses etc. for the disabled. This is not always obvious to those of us who are not disabled until it is pointed out, as indeed it has been in this Survey. It is something that PC will further assess and take action on, paying regard to the relevant legislation.

9 Young Persons Questionnaire

The youngsters who replied to this part of the Survey were almost equally divided between the category age groups 7-12, 13-17, and over 17 years, with a slight majority in the over 17 group. Most were still at school or college and do the sort of things young people do in their spare time - although our lot do appear to be a sporty bunch.

Although a third participated in organised activities they very clearly thought that there were not enough activities in the Parish for people of their age, and give as the primary reason for non-

participation, 'lack of preferred activity'. One third said they would participate in an activity if organised by the Parish.

The sort of things they have in mind, are Bike Trails (first in order of popularity by a factor of 2), with a Drop-in Café, Outdoor Meeting Area, Indoor Meeting Area, Adventure Area, BMX / Skate Board Park all coming out about equal second.

When asked 'What other comment would you like to make or activity would you like to suggest'

They said (summarising)

"A youth club is required to provide a place for youngsters to meet. As well as the supervised social element, the club should incorporate activities such as football, tennis, golf, dancing, drama, singing etc."

46% would like to see a Parish Youth Council and 26% would be prepared to help make some or all of the above happen.

The PC is already taking steps to establish a Youth Parish Council to help guide us in addressing the needs of the younger members of our community.



We want more! — and what's more we're going to help make it happen!

Our Parish Plan

Categorising the considerable amount of data from the Survey and writing the Plan based on it has proved a demanding task. We could simply have stated what could be done against each of the questions asked. However, some issues came up in several sections, and the comment fields contained a veritable wealth of often important suggestions; so finally it was decided, based on a suggestion of a Parish Councillor, to write the plan based on three 'Groupings'.

Group One Those elements identified that the Parish Council can directly influence — the formation of a Youth Council or construction of a new Parish Hall for example.

Group Two Those elements that the Parish Council supported by Parishioners can pursue with the legitimacy of the Plan behind them and are useable in responding to the external requirements of competent authorities (competent in this context meaning lawful) - or indeed lobbying the same. Examples in this case include

- speed limits
- policing
- housing
- enforcement, etc.

Group Three Those elements identified that the community supported or led by the Council can do something about themselves directly. The excellent lists of volunteers provides the resources. Without restating all those elements identified these might include:-

- clearing litter
- cleaning the street furniture, seats, signs and posts
- footpath maintenance
- community gardening, etc

We know that the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) will be unlikely to find the resources for many maintenance activities and there is much that volunteers could do on a regular but not too frequent basis to improve the environment in which we live.

So the Plan becomes the benchmark or reference document against which we measure our own and competent authorities performance - and to identify what could usefully be community activities.

The involvement and support of the community will be vital to implementing the Parish Plan.

The Parish Plan

Group One

- The Parish Council will seek to establish a Parish Youth Council as a matter of some importance by providing financial resources, a meeting venue, and initially by identifying some likely principal officers - potential 'champions'.
- The Parish Council will address the concerns of the community over housing development, and represent the feelings of the community through the implementation of a Village Design Statement for each village, and will use this to support our views on planning matters in our representations to WDC.
- The dissatisfaction over public highway footpaths will be addressed by the Parish Council and Footpaths Committee by lobbying ESCC Highways and by enlisting the support of working parties of volunteers. Through the Footpaths Committee the Council will be pursuing with renewed vigour those who have rampant undergrowth and unruly hedges that obstruct our public rights-of-way.
- The Parish Council will purchase additional traffic calming measures - likely to include a SID display, and if possible a laser speed gun. We will establish and train a group of volunteers to man the device(s) by calling on our Parish Volunteers. We will aim to 'go live' with a speed calming campaign in the Spring of 2006 pending the support of both ESCC Highways and the Police - both of whom the PC will continue to lobby.
- The Parish Council will facilitate the creation of a Parish News Sheet to convey information from all sectors of the Parish
 - By providing financial resources from the precept
 - By liaising with current local information sources such as Parish Magazines etc
 - By identifying individuals to undertake the task — more hands make lighter (and more satisfying) work
 - By identifying the optimum route to ensure all parishioners have free access to it.

This is in any case something the PC had already intended as part of achieving 'Quality Parish Council Status'.

- The Parish News Sheet will be used to better communicate Parish Council issues and other news from throughout the Parish and will convey information from local clubs and societies.
- The Parish Council will continue building a budget to help fund the construction of a new Buxted Parish Hall, which may also include some, albeit limited fa-

cilities for local services, notwithstanding our commitment to support local shops and businesses wherever possible by favourable consideration of planning applications etc.

- We will through the offices of our Parish Clerk maintain an up to date list of Parish Volunteers and will seek to support local activities by calling on these stout-hearted individuals. The list will not be for public consumption, but rather a resource where the first contact will be made through the Clerk as the 'Proper Officer' of the PC.
- The Parish Council will be responsible for communicating to the Parish information on planning policies and guidelines to help smooth the process and minimise potentially difficult situations for local residents. The PC will communicate information through the Parish News Sheet, Notice boards, Website and other means to ensure ease of access to important information.
- The Parish Council will undertake an audit of access issues for the disabled throughout the Parish, with the aim of seeking to address problems.
- The PC will lobby ESCC Highways to stop illegal parking on public land such as in Five Ash Down, and will help fund measures to make such areas inaccessible to vehicles.
- The PC will work with other local Parish Councils to explore grants for community buses.
- The PC will seek to cooperate with other rural parishes to collectively address matters affecting all our rural neighbours.
- The PC will maintain an up to date list of local businesses, which it will promote through the website and News Sheet.

Group Two

- The Parish Council will continue to lobby for a 40mph limit westwards out to Buxted C of E Primary School and eastwards out past Saxon Court.
- The Parish Council will lobby actively for improved rural policing, including the enforcement of speed limits, working with the Police where ever possible.
- The Parish Council will lobby actively for the introduction of a 'Quiet Lane' scheme throughout the Parish to reduce the 'rat running' and dangerous driving that are deterring people from walking, cycling and riding on the rural lanes.
- The Parish Council Planning Committee will be guided by the Parish Plan Survey to resist as strongly as possible planning applications that enlarge our village envelopes, giving preference instead to sensitive infill where possible - notwithstanding that the PC will resist division of garden plots and demolition of otherwise good housing stock to accommodate de-

velopment that is insensitive to the needs of the local community and the rural environment.

- Planning Applications for suitable off-road parking, where there is not an excessive number of vehicles for the household, will be positively supported by the Parish Council.
- On the issue of commuter parking in Buxted, the PC feel strongly that the problem exists largely because the parking facilities at Uckfield station are so woefully inadequate. This not only aggravates the parking, but also the 'rat run' problem with traffic from Uckfield using the rural lanes and Framfield Road as a shortcut. Before looking to provide additional parking in Buxted the PC will lobby to ensure the local market towns have appropriate parking - Buxted Station should not be developed to provide 'park and ride' facilities for commuters from 'far and wide'.
- Having consulted local residents, the PC is also looking into options for the residents of Framfield Road and surrounding areas to endeavour to alleviate the insensitive and often obstructive commuter parking.
- Given the Survey comments on Traffic and Transport and more recent experiences, the PC will lobby East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to conduct a safety audit on the A272 through the Parish, focusing especially on the Budletts intersection and the Church Road intersection. A review of the safety and the possibility of having the pedestrian crossing in Buxted converted from a Belisha to a traffic light controlled Panda crossing will be encouraged.
- Comments on the safety of the Grampian Foods site exit onto the A26 will inform our view on any planning application submitted for the re-development of the site.
- Similarly, because of speeding and road safety issues on the A26, the PC will lobby ESCC and the Police to address similar issues arising from any development of the Temple Grove site.
- The PC will, when considering the redevelopment of the Grampian Foods site lobby very strongly to have the longstanding issue of inadequate sewerage infrastructure addressed as pre-requisite to any development.
- The PC, when considering planning applications for the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings, will insist on appropriate restrictions on traffic movements and other inconvenience and disturbance to local residents - and will seek to ensure they are rigorously enforced.
- The PC will press for implementation locally of the WDC 'Crown Scheme' on recyclable waste, and highlight to WDC the need for further action to improve recycling, including the collection of recyclable waste and facilities for plastic and cardboard disposal in the Parish.

Group Three

- The Parish Council will work with the Youth Council to identify needs for more services/support for young people throughout the Parish - and if supported by the Youth Council will consider allocation of funds for informal meeting areas.
- The Parish Council will make available a grant awarding scheme to provide funding assistance to groups of local people of all ages who want to set up a local activity. Applications from youngsters will be reviewed by the PC in consultation with the planned Youth Council. We will also strongly support the seeking of other funding from additional sources.
- The Parish Council will have a policy of supporting both Parish and local village events, such as fetes etc., and efforts toward community and environmental improvement when required to do so, up to and including a measure of financial assistance.
- The Parish Council will encourage local residents to work cooperatively with them to address local needs and issues. It is no longer possible to simply expect other authorities to do things - the local community needs to pull together and work together.

- Progress on the Plan will be reviewed annually and presented at the Buxted Parish Annual Assembly which is the community's own meeting and opportunity to question the PC on its work. The Plan will thus be audited with the opportunity for amendment year on year.
- The PC will remain cognisant of local issues and needs. Where deemed appropriate, the PC will lobby actively the relevant authorities to address these where they are outside the remit of the PC's own authority.

The Parish Council believe that through the Parish Plan findings the PC will be better equipped to keep the villages of Buxted Parish sustainable and vibrant rural communities.

For further information on the Buxted Parish Plan please contact:

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Quote of the Survey was given in answer to question 4.12.

Although not everyone's favourite topic and now seemingly defunct, what is key is the importance of local communities;

'4.12 How do you think we should best protect and enhance the character and life of our Parish'

'The EU constitution article I-45,3 includes a very specific mandatory requirement that "decisions shall be taken...as closely as possible to the citizen". When ratified the EU constitution becomes international law. So, if a decision has to be taken on new housing, etc., in the village, it has to be taken by the Parish Council, as being "as closely as possible to the citizen". Any decision taken not "as closely as possible to the citizen" will be illegal under international law. The Parish Council must insist that things be done legally and refuse to accept anything done contrary to international law.'

This only goes to show what an amazing resource we have at our fingertips if we look for it - and indeed while the EU Constitution may now be defunct, the Government is looking at enhancing the role of Parish Councils to provide closer to the 'grass routes' decision making.

So this Parish Plan is very timely and activities such as this will become more important in the future, to help define and maintain the lifestyles we want.

Acknowledgements:

Those who helped in the production of the Parish Plan are listed below in no particular order—other than alphabetical

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Images used

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Other images include photographs, and drawings from the Parish Website, and which originally came from various documents produced by the WI, Buxted Art Group, an excellent website <http://thesussexweald.org> containing a wealth of local historical information and no doubt others too numerous to mention, and who we hope will not be offended if not appropriately acknowledged here. Cover images provided by members of the community with design freely contributed by Rocky MacMahon.

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