

SOCIAL DIARY – see the events diary on cuckfield.org for more information

FEBRUARY

■ Friday 26 - Cuckfield Society Winter Lecture - Geoffrey Mead presents a History of Sussex Agriculture. In the Council Chamber at the Queen's Hall. Entrance £4, £3 for members, includes a welcome drink.

MARCH

■ Saturday 13th – NSPCC book sale 10am – midday, Youth Club London Lane. Drop off books Friday 9-3 or Saturday before 9.30
 ■ Sat 13th – Cuckfield Local Market in the Talbot courtyard 10am–1pm
 ■ Sunday 14th - mobile waste collection at Broad Street Car Park. 10am - midday
 ■ Tuesday 16th - New England Wood Trust Annual Public Meeting. In the upstairs committee room of the Old School. Time: 7pm
 ■ Friday 19th – Museum Champagne Lecture - The Making of the Antiques Roadshow. Given by Geoffrey Godden in the Queens Hall. 8pm
 ■ Friday 26th - Cuckfield Society AGM, Queen's hall Council Chamber. 7.30 for 8pm

APRIL

■ Mon 5th- ISOC Easter Monday Walking Race
 ■ Sat 10th - Cuckfield Local Market in the Talbot courtyard 10am–1pm
 ■ Thursday 15th - Cuckfield, its Neighbourhood, People and Place. A talk by Dr Peter Brandon, in the Queens Hall. 8 pm
 ■ Saturday 17th – recital by young members of the Royal Operatic Society at Holy Trinity Church in aid of the NSPCC. Evening
 ■ Sat 24th- CEA QUIZ NIGHT: Theme "There'll Always be an England" to mark St Georges Day. The Old School, £10 to include supper plus a licensed bar will be available. 7:15 for 7:30pm.

MAY

■ Monday 3rd – Cuckoo fair at the recreation ground. Official opening by the Mayor at 1pm.
 ■ Saturday 8th - Cuckfield Local Market in the Talbot courtyard 10am – 1pm
 ■ Thursday 13th - Sussex Inns and Their Architecture. A talk by Dr Janet Pennington in the Queens Hall. 8pm
 ■ Sat 15th – NSPCC plant sale at Brinkley Lodge, London Road. Morning.

Village Show

This years' village show will be taking place on Saturday 11 September and you will find within your newsletter a list of this years' classes. Please look through the list carefully as there are changes in all sections. Schedules and entry forms will be issued to members in early summer and will be available online or around the village for non-members so keep an eye out for more information as it is produced. The show takes a lot of organising so if you feel that you would be able to help, please contact Jo on 452187 or email jo_roche@btopeworld.com

NEWS FLASH! Cuckfield Village Design Statement – your help is needed

The Parish Council and the Cuckfield Society are looking for volunteers to assist in formulating an important document for Cuckfield called The Village Design Statement. Many villages are currently working on putting one of these together because of growing concerns that villages are losing their identity as a result of mass development, standardization in design and loss of purpose. This is a good opportunity for the local community to attempt to define the qualities and the unique character of the village through meetings, consultation days and in co-operation with the local planning authority. The statement has to look towards the future as it will influence the design of new development within the next 25 years. Its purpose is to ensure that the village retains its individuality and its character through future development both large and small. The statement will include:

- the History of Cuckfield
- Cuckfield today
- Businesses in Cuckfield
- Buildings
- Boundaries
- Guidelines for development
- Roads, road signage
- Open spaces
- Approaches, vista, footpaths.

An initial meeting took place on February 8th but there are still plenty of opportunities for you to help and get involved. If you are interested, please contact Marie Dormer on 441889 or email dorjo27@btinternet.com.

The Cuckfield Society – What's in it for you?

So, you've got to the end of the newsletter and read all about the issues and activities which affect our village for good and for bad. Well before you pop off and make a cup of tea, please just take a couple more minutes to read on and find out a bit more about how you can do something great and keep our wonderful village going from strength to strength.....

My first year in the Committee of the Cuckfield Society

I cautiously went to my first Committee meeting in February 2009 after a good friend and neighbour persuaded me to go along. I had concerns with joining as I have very little spare time. I have a busy work and family life with three young children and my husband who is often away on business. I had been living in Cuckfield for just under two years and I have to admit that I knew very little about the Cuckfield Society and what they did for the Village.

The past year has opened my eyes to what the Cuckfield Society is about and how it helps make our village such a special place to live in, such as:

Events - The Village Show, the Summer Show, the Christmas Street Festival, the Winter Lectures and attendance at the Cuckoo Fair & the Mayor's Procession.

Heritage – There is a dedicated team who look at all planning applications for all kinds of developments within the village and they offer help and support to concerned residents.

Communications - There is a fantastic website www.cuckfield.org which helps the whole community of Cuckfield in many different ways. It is a key source of communication within the village, whether it is for advertising a local business, highlighting concerns of development, looking at news and events and includes lots of local history, it is jam packed with information. There is also Newsletter sent quarterly to members and annually to all residents of Cuckfield.

Other projects - I really enjoyed getting involved in the planting of 4000 daffodil bulbs, although hard work at the time I think our efforts will be very rewarding in the spring. There have also been several 'Tidy ups' and teams of people making Cuckfield stay beautiful.

Charity – The Cuckfield Society also supports and helps Cuckfield clubs and charities. Money raised from events directly benefits people within the village.

So a year later, I feel privileged to be involved in such a fundamental and important group within the village. I have met lots of lovely people and had many laughs and the odd glass of wine here and there! We meet once a month and always need more members on the Committee. Every little helps so I would strongly recommend that if you love living in Cuckfield, you can help keep it that way by becoming a member, or like me, joining the Committee where your help and ideas are warmly appreciated. We can all be a part of keeping Cuckfield so special!

If you would like to join the Society, please just complete the enclosed form and return it to our membership secretary. If you feel that you can offer more or would just like to come along to a committee meeting and find out what we are all about, please contact any of the committee listed on this page.

Registered Charity 249110

Patron: Sir Richard Kleinwort *President:* Stephen Cockburn
Vice Presidents: Katie Stewart and Nick Rowe

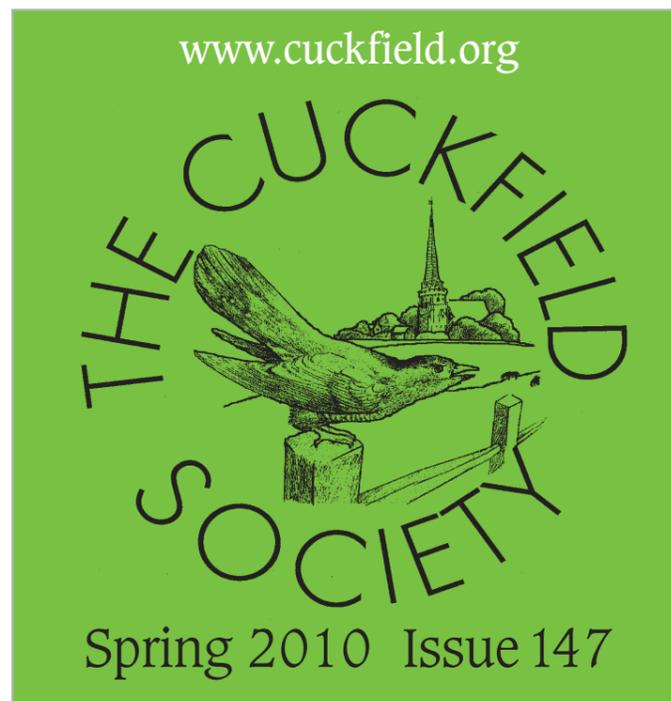
COMMITTEE LIST

Officers		
Chairman	Guy Powell	416746 samtem_56@yahoo.com
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General Committee

Shirley Deacon	416640
Trish Denyer	452254 pdenyer@wsqfl.org.uk
Stephanie Gilpin	451770 ssgilpin@tiscali.co.uk
Iain Goodchild	414586
Paul Mantripp	415586 paul.mantripp@talk21.com
(Chair of Heritage)	

www.cuckfield.org village life online, have you tried it yet?



Thoughts from the Chair

Welcome everyone to the Cuckfield Society's Newsletter – this edition goes to every household in the village and I would encourage you to **READ ON** as there are a great many issues now arising that have the potential to significantly impact our community as a whole.

For instance - are you aware of:

- ◆ The Proposed Waste Processing facility adjacent to the A272 Cuckfield by-pass?
- ◆ The excellent role played by the residents (CRAG) in fighting the proposed development of Chatfield Road?
- ◆ The Proposed Development behind Bylanes Close?
- ◆ SHLAA – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment?
- ◆ Village Design Statement?

These are just some of the activities associated with planning applications and the potential development of Cuckfield and the surrounding countryside that the Society is participating in on behalf of our members.

Whilst the popular media has been full of 'doom and gloom' with regards property investments the reality is that Cuckfield remains an extremely attractive target for developers as it is a highly desirable community – the investment risk for developments is significantly less than in many of the surrounding villages.

It is not our role to either police these developments or conversely stick our head in the sand and oppose all development per se – it is sometimes better to embrace progress and influence its development rather than ignore it completely and complain later!

However, as a voice representing around 40% of the current Cuckfield households (over 400) our role can best be defined as the following:

- We review all (publicly available) proposed developments, on a monthly basis, and publish a list on our new website so it is easily visible and referenceable – no digging around in obscure council websites
- We advise and have participated with various local residents committees in relation to the developments that specifically affect their environment

- We interact with the Parish Council as a body representing a large portion of the community
- We respond and interact directly with Developers and architects plus the appropriate Council departments (proposed Waste disposal site, as an example – see letter posted)
- We are there to respond to your questions and represent your views – this is especially important with regards to the Village Design Statement. This is an opportunity for the community to define ITS VIEW on how the village should embrace progress whilst maintaining the unique qualities that are so important to Cuckfield as a whole.

In addition we participate and organize a number of village events – not least the Village Show in September – its fifth year and ever growing; the Winter lectures; Christmas Street Festival (on behalf of the Parish Council); the new and much improved web site (financed though a local grant) and not least the village 'tidy up campaign' which included planting 4,000 bulbs in various verges which (fingers crossed) should be showing signs of life as you read this newsletter!

If you feel **strongly** about any of these topics and have the time and inclination to work through these issues...please offer your support by becoming a committee member...but at the very least if you aren't yet a member...please complete the enclosed form and be kept up to date on the Societies progress and activities throughout the year – we publish a further 3 Quarterly Newsletter that just go to our members. The larger the membership the greater the voice...be a participant from now on!

Guy Powell, *Chairman*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 46th Annual General Meeting of the Cuckfield Society will take place on Friday 26th March at 7.30 for 8pm in the Queens Hall, High Street, Cuckfield. All members welcome. Please notify any agenda items to the Secretary by Friday 12th March.

We have a few committee vacancies to fill at this AGM so if you care about our village and are able to spare 2 hours a month plus some extra time for the occasional event then please speak to any committee member.

Subscription reminder

IF you have not yet paid your subscription for 2010 then please do so as soon as possible to Dennis Burstow, Membership Secretary, Lower Shades, South Street, RH17 5LB

FREE BUSINESS DIRECTORY ENCLOSED

In conjunction with Cuckfield Local, we have produced the enclosed FREE business directory listing over 100 companies all based in the village. Unlike other directories which you may receive, this only includes businesses from Cuckfield and has not cost the businesses any money to be included. We have individually verified each entry to ensure that all the information is up to date and in many cases you will find more information, such as menus and other details on the business pages of Cuckfield.org

Keep the directory by the phone and support your local businesses.

HERITAGE

For the past 12 months and more the Society has charted the progress of the strategic planning process within Mid Sussex. Using our newsletters and web site we have provided details of both the Core Housing Strategy and SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment). The SHLAA is a comprehensive study of the potential of the District to accommodate additional housing development required by national planning policy.

Mid Sussex District Council has a fixed obligation to provide and/or demonstrate that it has made provision to achieve some 17,000 new homes within the next 13 years. However, it has an equally fixed obligation to make planned provision for new homes in the shorter timeframe of 5 years. It is this second obligation that has recently become exceedingly problematic.

In the Spring 09 newsletter we published a map showing all sites assessed through the SHLAA in Cuckfield. This was taken from a more comprehensive map of the Mid Sussex region. We warned that any failure to provide adequate land throughout Mid Sussex as a whole would potentially leave the area vulnerable to uncontrolled speculative development.

For reference an updated version of this map is reproduced below. This map was initially published in March 2009 at the conclusion of the SHLAA. At that time the colour code represented: Green – site developable in 1 to 5 years, Orange - site developable from year 6 to 2026, Red – not currently developable. There are currently some 18 potential SHLAA sites identified within the village. The updated plan has land allocation 227, from the Glebe Road twitten to Ardingly Road, marked as orange and therefore under consideration in years 1 to 5.

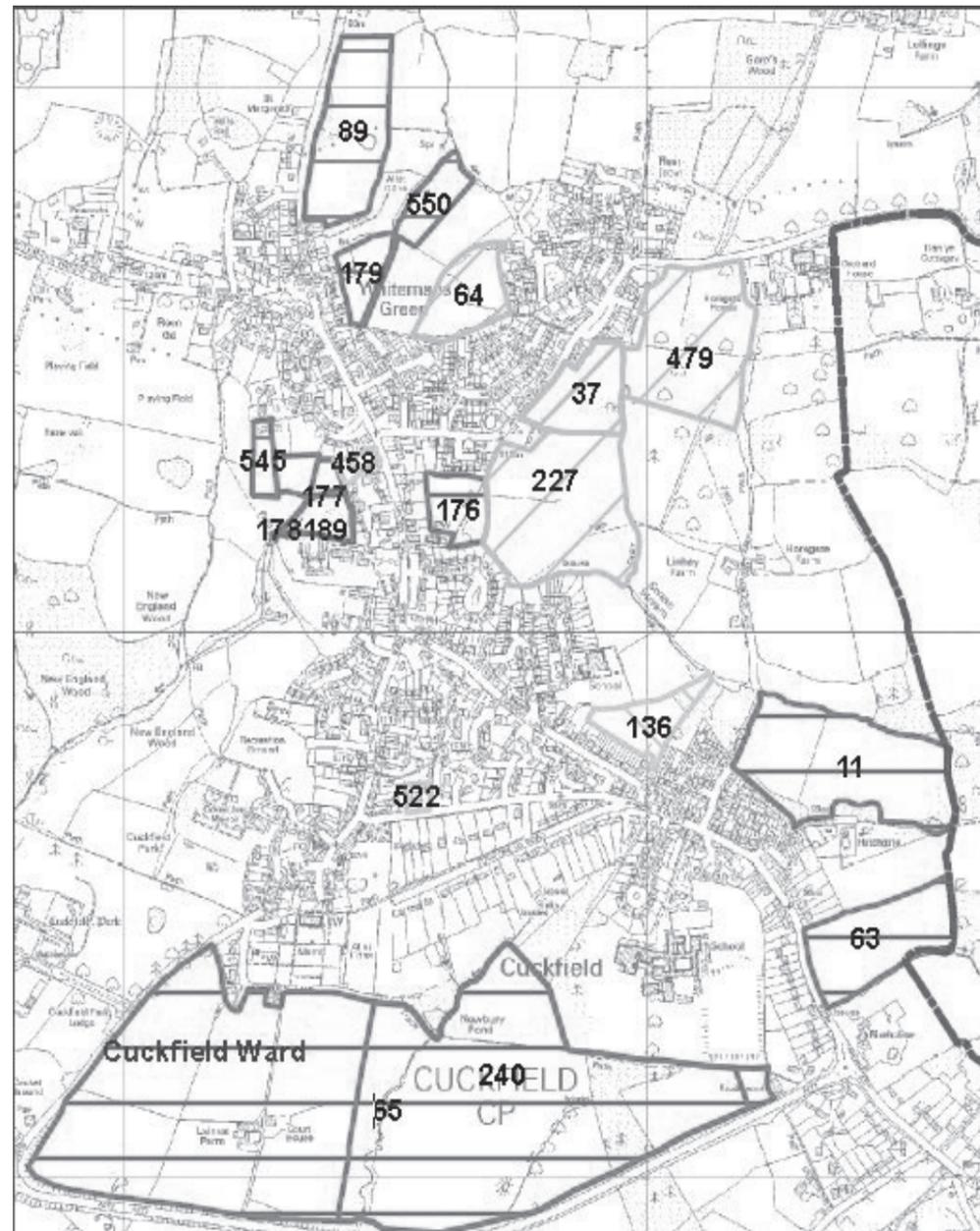
The MSDC 5 year plan depended for success on significant developments in Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath. These plans were recently dealt a severe blow, when it became evident that the Southern Water sewerage system was unable to support additional housing in these areas. This has created a window of opportunity for developers to challenge the 5 year plan as being undeliverable and seek to build in areas designated for potential development in years 6 to 2026 (Orange)

The first of these applications was received by MSDC over the Christmas period, for a development by Rydon Homes of 42 properties on land allocation 64 (see map), at the end of Bylanes Close. The application is for a mixed development of freehold, affordable and social housing. The Society immediately sent an email to members, for whom it has addresses, alerting them of the proposal and posted a notice on our web site. The application is set to go before the MSDC planning committee in early April 2010.

The Rydon Homes application is ominous as the land is outside the village development boundary, has been previously refused development permission by a planning inspector and is designated an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). AONB's are heavily protected, but there is obviously an element of confidence by the developer engendered by the failure of the MSDC 5 year plan. The application is well considered and seeks to exploit the current circumstance.

Development on land off Chatfield Road

On 28 January 2010 a planning inspector refused the appeal by Bellway Homes to build 44 homes on land allocation 136 (see map). His decision most unfortunately centred on the design and layout of the site and not the traffic and highways issues that were equally paramount. The principle of residential development of the site remains in place, as determined by a previous inspector. This has left the door open for a revised application by Bellway Homes and not left MSDC much room for manoeuvre.



The Chatfield Residents Action Group (CRAG) has fought an excellent campaign to rebuff the application thus far and will continue to do so. We can only wait and see how Bellway Homes react.

Development at Delmon House

An application has been made to MSDC to demolish Delmon House, fill in the pond and construct 4 new homes. This application is at a fairly advanced stage and raises several important issues. There are historical covenants relating to the maintenance of the pond and limiting construction to certain distances from the boundary. There is always concern that this will merely be Phase 1 of a future larger development. The proposed access to one of the plots clearly allows for a future possibility of access towards the large rear lake and the land beyond. This would push against the village development boundary.

Proposed West Sussex County Council Waste Treatment Facility

WSSCC have included a site adjacent to the existing sewerage treatment plant off the Cuckfield by-pass as a potential location for a new waste treatment plant. This is one of a number of locations that are currently under consideration prior to producing a short list of preferred sites. WSSCC have started a consultation process, but as seems to be the case so often these days, public consultation means public body consultation, not local residents.

Notwithstanding this, the Society has written to WSSCC asserting that the views of the village be considered as part of the consultation process and that we are included within the subsequent decision making progress.

Anyone wishing to make their views known should write to:

Derek Whittington

*Cabinet Member for Highways & Strategic Planning
West Sussex County Council
2nd Floor Northleigh County Hall
Chichester West Sussex PO19 1RG*

THE WAY FORWARD

Further details of all the issues raised in this piece are available on our website.

As Guy has mentioned in his **Thoughts from the Chair**, the Society interacts with planning authorities and developers where appropriate. We are not a consultee in the planning process but try to act as the eyes and ears of the village, supporting the Parish Council whilst representing the views and best interests of our members and the village.

It is now clear that a very real risk exists that the village will be subject to numerous planning applications for new homes. A conservative estimate (excluding the by-pass land) would be that if the current allocations were taken up within an uncontrolled timeframe, the village would approximately double in size within the next 4-5 years. There has always been a healthy degree of scepticism that this was possible, but even if we go some way towards this level of construction - it will change Cuckfield for ever.

Paul Mantripp Chair of Heritage

Cuckfield Local - 1 year on (almost)

Cuckfield Local (www.cuckfield.org/local) is soon coming up to its first anniversary and thoughts have naturally turned to our achievements over this period. There have been the hugely successful food and fungi foraging walks, the thriving monthly market of local produce (2nd Sat of every month) and the talk on domestic renewable energy, to name but a few. A couple of new projects which are currently being developed include an aim to make Cuckfield a plastic bag free village and a land share scheme at Warden Park school. We are a merry band of all ages who meet every other Wednesday (eg. 3rd Mar) at the Talbot Inn in the High Street. Anyone wishing to find out more about the group or indeed wishing to jump straight in and get involved, please come along and share a (non alcoholic, organic, carbon neutral) drink with us ...only joking, you'll find us down to earth and completely normal (probably)...

Website News

If you haven't recently been to cuckfield.org then now's the time to have a look around. Not only does it have a brand new look and simplified layout, but you are now able to access the events page and add your own public events, use the search facility and list items for sale, wanted, free, lost or found. Take a look, get yourself a login and start selling (or buying!)

Cuckfield Hero

In the last newsletter we asked members to nominate members of the Cuckfield Community who they felt gave something extra to the village to make it such a special place to live. Whether it was organising events or activities, helping out their neighbours or some other activity that we all benefit from, we want to celebrate the heroes of our village so are calling on YOU to vote for your favourite. We will be announcing the results and presenting the winner with a token of our gratitude at our AGM on March 26th.

Here are the nominees with a little bit that their proposers have said about them:

Bridget Rice. "She turns out to every event, baking, supporting, growing and is a stalwart who contributes more than most."

Bryan & Sue Mayou (owners of Cuckfield Park). "For freely providing their land for so many village events"

Clive Rees (super neighbour and bunting master). Nominated twice, Clive "gets up whatever the weather to get the flags up on time" and as a good neighbour he "is always willing to help in any way and can & will tackle and solve any problem from practical to emotional, all done with a genuine sense of caring and friendship for others and a great sense of humour. He helps throughout the High Street and beyond."

Jill Dawson (Head teacher at Holy Trinity School). "She makes a massive contribution through her visible presence, not just to our kids lives, but (through the benefits a good school brings to an area) to all of our lives.

Martin Ingebretsen (the "voice" of Cuckfield at most events). "He does [so much work] on behalf of the very many societies in Cuckfield let alone the Independent State of Cuckfield. Over many years his sense of community is and has been second to none. It is an honour to Cuckfield to have such an individual in our midst and this should be recognised."

Robin Whyte. "A long term committee member of the Cuckfield Society as well as Treasurer and chairman of the Heritage sub-committee. He has also been treasurer and a trustee of Cuckfield Museum for at least 8 years, became a member of the executive committee of the museum when it was formed in 2004 and has chaired this committee for nearly two years. In all of these roles he has been extremely positive and active."

We were absolutely delighted to receive so many nominations and think it is the perfect reflection of our wonderful village, made so great by the people that live & work here.

To vote for your Cuckfield Hero, either visit the Cuckfield Society pages of cuckfield.org and follow the instructions, or send your name (only one vote per person), post code and who you would like to vote for to: "Cuckfield Hero", c/o Jo Roche, Crouchlands, Whitmans Green, Cuckfield, RH17 5BZ.

Closing date for voting is Weds 24th March.