

Hurstpierpoint Society Newsletter – Spring 2016



Charity No. 263520

The Society's Tree Planting Scheme.

The Society's recent tree planting scheme started in 2011 with the planting of three Maple trees in Albourne Road. Before this date the Society had been planting trees in Hurstpierpoint on an ad hoc basis wherever it was thought that a tree would make a genuine difference to the general outlook.

The current scheme has represented a deliberate effort to improve the vista of as many roads as possible throughout the village. As our planting was one tree every four houses, the Society had to decide the tree layout and for the nearby residents to agree with the planting and care of the tree. It was also the Society's view that the trees should be of a certain age of growth to ensure the best possible future for them in a residential setting and that the trees would be provided free to encourage such planting. Our planting this year could be the last of this current scheme where more than 106 trees having been planted. Thereafter we will go back to ad hoc planting to fill in the gaps that still need the benefit of a tree. Many thanks to those who have donated to this scheme.



The High Street Shops – use them or lose them!

We all love our shops in the High Street and we villagers feel great pride in having a commercial centre that many other villages have long lost. Recently, the closure of 6 shops sent a shockwave through our community. Thankfully 3 are reopening and we hope that more shops will open again. Certainly all the specialist shops can only thrive with a strong internet presence these days.

We congratulate Lucy Driver, owner of Southdown Cellars, on winning 2015 Independent Retailer of the Year in the International Wine & Spirit Competition, Independent Drinks Retailer of the Year 2016 and Regional Merchant of the Year (South and South East England). Whether you want a wine for everyday or something special for a celebration, you can find it there.

Maddy Dunckley (maddydunckley@aol.com) is soon to organise a second meeting with shopkeepers and shoppers to promote the High Street and boost its trade. We support her initiative and would encourage people to walk to our shops for a lot of shopping and a nice chat.

Conservation and Design Awards 2016

Houses in Western Road

Contractor: Allum Associates

Good reuse of brownfield land providing a well assembled and cohesive small development of an infill group of village houses in keeping with the scale of its immediate neighbours, The choice and variations of external facing materials units provide a welcome and sympathetic addition to the character of the immediate area, replacing former industrial buildings and yard.



View of houses in Western Road

Extension to St Lawrence School

Headmaster: Paul Dyer, Chairman of Governors: Tim Moulds

Architects: Felce and Guy of Hove. Project Architect: Andy Waters.

Well thought out and executed significant extension to existing school. It works well in plan, and circulation and achieves a comfortable non institutional user friendly series of linked spaces. The choice of external cladding materials demonstrates a different (more thermally efficient) function of external walls and is not a copy attempt of the original and subsequent extensions brickwork.



External and Internal Views of Extension to St Lawrence School

Doors and windows, the Coach house, Trinity Road

Owner: Oliver Meade

Architect: Hayhurst

Builder: Chalmers.

A simple yet effective solution to new fenestration replacing vertical sliding garage doors, affording views out from newly created living space onto the organic patterned driveway. Economic use of plain painted timber glazed doors with solid painted timber casement hung shutters on unpainted galvanised gate hinges.



Doors and windows, the Coach house, Trinity Road

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan

Consultations on this ended in January and the Plan should go to the Planning Inspectorate for examination for its “soundness” later this year, with a referendum to follow. The topic of most interest is inevitably the extent of proposed house building. The figures put forward are in the range 210 to 270 houses and the three sites proposed are; the National Tyre depot—20 units, land north of Clayton Mills which is off Mackie Avenue- 140 houses and finally the southern part of the Hassocks Golf Club- 130 dwellings. As far as our village is concerned the Plan incorporates an important Policy which safeguards the local gap between Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint, to retain the separate identity of each settlement. Development will only be supported where it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture, makes a valuable contribution to the landscape or would not compromise the integrity of the gap. Unfortunately until this Plan is finalised Hassocks remains vulnerable as the continuing pressure for housing on Ham Fields, off London Road shows. Fortunately our village has a ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plan and we are protected as far as is currently possible from such pressures as we have seen from recent decisions by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government . We should be very grateful that our Parish Council has taken the lead in this.

A change of stile!

Those of you who walk in our countryside will have noted some changes in the fields to the south of the village. Some of the stiles had steps and a narrow gap to squeeze through. These can be very difficult for those with limited mobility or those of advanced years. Further some of the wooden stiles are easily vandalised and not always stock proof. With the help of WSCC metal kissing gates have been installed by the Monday Group around Danny Park and the fields near Tott Farm. Although these are not like the gates the Society helped to have installed around Pakyns Farm, they are very much fit for purpose. They allow through passage while carrying a backpack, are self-closing and prevent livestock getting through. There is a new bridge leading from Danny Park going toward Bedlam Street where stiles have been replaced with metal kissing gates. The Monday Group does a fantastic job helping to maintain rights of way in our Parish. The workers are all volunteers and often depend on funds donated to provide materials. They are always looking for more volunteers and if you are interested contact John Card the West Sussex organiser on 01444 243713 or look at their website www.mondaygroup.org



Danger in those hills!

The group known as Friends of Wolstonbury organises working parties on the Hill twice a month. Whilst raking up some leaves, prior to putting on the fire, one of the volunteers noticed something metal in the pile. It was a cylinder about the size of a WD40 can with 4 bobbles on the base and a bit of wire sticking out of the top. He put it on a tree stump pending further investigation. One of the group then realized it was a mortar!! The police were contacted, they taped off the area and called the MOD who carefully packed it up and took it away! We know the Downs were used extensively by the army during the Second World War and a young man was killed in the 1950s by a live mortar he found. Always contact the Police if you find anything suspicious and don't be tempted to investigate further.

Police Presence

Our PCSO Joel Havicon from the Neighbourhood Police Team at Burgess Hill has been the most visible (only?) presence on our streets. Fortunately the level of crime locally has fallen. Sussex Police have to save a further £50M by 2020. One consequence is that all the current PCSOs in Sussex, about 300, are being made redundant and there will be only about 200 new posts. The focus of the job will change and will no longer have a specified community link. The concept of the local village bobby is finally dead! This highlights the importance of Neighbourhood Watch which seeks to reduce crime and the fear of crime. We have about 20 active coordinators in the Village, but there are significant gaps, so more recruits are needed. Please contact the Parish Office if you think you can help.

Old photographs of the village

Photographs taken in 1975 have been scanned (Thank you Tim Jones) and should soon be available on a link on the Society's website.

The Woodland, Flora and Fauna Group

The Chairman of the group, Michael Nailard, is a member of the Society's committee. They have recently completed a massive biodiversity survey of the parish countryside which started in 2004. All data has now been entered on Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre's database to protect valuable parish areas of flora & fauna. The group's newsletter also records the establishment of a large conservation area for barn owls covering the southern Mid Sussex area, with the installation of 41 breeding boxes. In 2015 the bat nesting boxes they had previously installed in parish woodlands in 2009 were inspected by licensed volunteers and many roosting occupants were found. These boxes have compensated for loss of roosting opportunities due to the decline of suitable areas of natural habitat and have hopefully stopped their population reduction. Dormice have been found in a local wood and nesting boxes are being erected for them to assist survival as they only now remain in the south-east of England. The restoration of the meadowland at Pond Lye SNCI has continued to encourage former notable species of flora to flourish again and a huge woodland pond in Sayers Common has been re-established for the benefit of wildlife. The group has received a Highly Commended Award from CPRE Sussex for their work on countryside and wildlife conservation projects. Contact Michael: 01273 834001. Email: dralianmarine@aol.com

New housing

There has been very rapid progress in providing new housing to the north of the Village on both sides of Chalkers Lane, in line with our Neighbourhood Plan. Chalkers Lane north (38 units) has sold out and David Wilson Homes are making rapid progress with the other, Chalkers Lane south (61 units). The Society objected to a slight encroachment into a buffer strip designed to protect adjoining woodland.

The next major developments will be at Little Park Farm to the east of Idenhurst (140 units) and to the north of Highfield Drive (17 units). These will bring with them 2 large areas of community parkland to be known as Hurst Meadows. The Parish Council is now looking at the best management structure for this land and has invited the Society, and other local groups, to be involved.



At the other end of the scale there are odd houses being “popped in” throughout the village, a policy which the Society generally favours as long as these houses respect the identity of the area especially if in the conservation area. We also have regard to neighbour amenity and pedestrian safety and highway issues.

Those of you who venture down Trinity/Brown Twins road will notice the loss of trees, just before the entrance to Trinity Court. The Society objected to the application to build 2 contemporary dwellings in the back garden of one of the houses on Hassocks Road. We felt these trees contributed to the Conservation area. In addition that area of our village is over parked and potentially more dangerous with additional vehicles going in and out of the new properties. There were also views that the flat roofed design and contemporary style was not appropriate in that setting and not in line with our village design statement. There would also be “overlooking “of neighbours. The construction process can lead to damage to retained trees. There is also the adverse impact on wildlife. Sadly our view did not prevail with the District Council.

New street naming

There has been some debate about street and road names in these new developments. The Parish Council proposes to use the names of people who have been influential in our village; not just their family names but their first names too. For example Harriet Gurney Lane at Chalkers Lane south: Harriet Gurney paid for St. Christopher's House for the Aged in 1898. This is next to St Lawrence School and still in use for the same purpose today. Harriet said she had it built for those "who may otherwise have to spend their last days in the workhouse". Hopefully this will give a real sense of identity and history to the new estates.

Where to play?

Does your (grand?) son or daughter play football for Hurst Colts, or would like to? For weeks now they haven't been allowed onto the flooded pitches. Even if they had, a game of football isn't the same when you can scarcely walk and the ball just stops in the mud. Meanwhile, the growing number of children can't experience teamwork, leadership, respect and all the great things that team sports give them. On Sundays, Brighton Blues Rugby have scarcely missed a day's play in 5 years. Why? They have a 3G artificial pitch. Not the hard Tarmac thing of old, but proper artificial grass. No grazes when they fall. And they come home with clean kit! It looks like grass, but it's better than grass. And it's not just for youth rugby; when the other pitches in Sussex are wet, Brighton hosts senior matches for overseas visitors, league games and county matches. These pitches withstand a huge amount of use; the Brighton pitch is used by schools, clubs and individuals 7 days a week. We desperately need an artificial pitch in Hurst. As the village expands and more families join us, it is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Sports clubs create united communities for life and help new arrivals into the community. St Lawrence School has built an artificial playing surface, but it's a hard one and can't be used in a frost. Hurst College has the same, but no artificial grass. There is already space at either Fairfield rec or Court Bushes. Cost? About £350,000 gets you a full size FIFA approved pitch. In 20 years everyone will be using these and will be amazed that we even tried to play in mud. We should tap every source possible; government loans, lottery grants, section 106 payments from house builders, club funds, donations and bequests, sponsorship, the lot. And it will create income from other local clubs; at this time of year it will be booked from dawn to dusk every Saturday. Maybe Hurst College would like to own a share of it for use during the week? If you agree, start the conversation with anyone and everyone, and we can make it happen.

Mid Sussex District Plan.

This is nearing the stage where it will go to the Planning Inspectorate. Again the housing numbers attract special interest. The Plan has now been revised upward to 13000 units or more than 800 per year over a 15 year period. Options here are limited as much of Mid Sussex is in the South Downs National Park or High Weald Area of Outstanding Beauty. All this will put increased pressure on those Parish and Town Councils which do not have confirmed Neighbourhood Plans. To partly address this shortage a large new expansion (600 houses) is now planned at a new strategic housing site at Pease Pottage.

Hurstpierpoint Society AGM: Saturday 23 April 2016

The Annual General Meeting will take place in the Village Centre at 2 p.m. on Saturday 23 April. This will include the presentation of the Society's Conservation and Design Awards, followed by a talk by Maggie Henderson on the history of the Mansion House, High Street. All members are invited to attend.

Patron: Mrs Judy Parfitt President: Lady Cynthia Barnes Vice President: Mrs Wendy Rogers

Committee: Chairman – vacancy; Hon Treasurer- Patrick Haworth; Hon Secretary - David Clarke; Membership Secretary - Sue Deane; Members - Guy Hudson, Tim Jones, Michael Nailard, Shelagh Wadman, Ray Wicks; Parish Council: Stephen Hand

Contacts: Enquiries: hurstsociety@gmail.com Website: www.hurstpierpointsociety.org.uk

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