



WINTER 2010

# Cuckfield

## REVIEW

**2010! A new year and time to both lay down new plans and perhaps peek at past disappointments for things to improve. A change the Parish Council has implemented for the New Year is to take the publication of the Cuckfield Review back in house. We had difficulty getting a consistent service from the publisher but this and future issues will be under our total control. We are committed to providing four issues a year to keep you up to date with matters affecting Cuckfield and our Community.**

**Also, do try and come to our Open Morning on Saturday 30 January. A great opportunity to meet, see what is happening and exchange views. A little belated maybe but nevertheless we wish a very Happy 2010 to everyone living and working in this fine town.**

*Robert Salisbury, Chairman*

### PLANNING

You will have read in the local press that the Mid Sussex District Council Planning Committee turned down planning permission on the land off Chatfield Road.

The Parish Council and the Chatfield Road Action Group put a great deal of work into the assessment of this application. It should be recognised that whilst, for the local community, the application was clearly in contravention of many MSDC policies and that the proposals for access made no sense at all, all the factors were marginal and it may have been difficult for the officers to find solid grounds to recommend rejection; particularly with the pressure that is on to provide more sites. Thankfully, the members of the Planning Committee gave due weight to the objections raised and decided that the development, as proposed,

would not be in the best interests of the community. Objections were not against the development of the land per se, but on very specific issues to do with design, ecological issues and access.

Bellway Homes have lodged an appeal which will be dealt with at a Hearing on 12 January 2010 at the District Council offices. Local residents will be represented by the Chatfield Residents Action Group and Cuckfield Parish Council will be represented by the Chairman, Robert Salisbury. We hope to know the Inspector's decision within about six weeks of the Hearing.

### WHAT IS A SHLAA?

Deciding on land areas suitable for development is a complex business and the District Council continue to develop strategic plans to ensure that there is land available for development.



David Foord-Brown's winning Christmas window display.

### DIARY DATE

## PARISH COUNCIL OPEN MORNING

**Saturday 30 January 2010**

Queen's Hall

10.30am – 12.30pm

- Come and find out about what is going on in the village.
- Meet your local councillors and local groups.
- Have a say on how you would like to see Cuckfield in the future.

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They are required by government to make a supply of land available to meet the housing targets laid down.

The battle over the big strategic sites continues but smaller developments are currently under the spotlight. A team of MSDC planners made a presentation to the Parish Annual Meeting and described Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). For Cuckfield they are mainly focusing on plots of land to the east of Ardingly Road and one plot off Bylanes Close. The fact that these parcels of land are under review does NOT mean they will necessarily be developed. They are being 'assessed' and may or may not be found suitable. The Parish Council are forming a small group of specialists to review the MSDC reports and make further comment, so if you have a specialist skill that can assist us please contact the Parish Clerk.

**Queen's Hall**

The good news is that the hall has had a very busy summer and autumn. The building is now a venue of choice for civil ceremonies and wedding receptions. When decorated, the hall looks lovely and, when the sun is shining, the decking area and garden are most attractive. The cost of holding a function at the hall remains very reasonable and hirers have complete freedom as to how to manage their event. We have already taken a number of bookings for 2010 – dates are filling fast! However, following some changes with our regular hirers, we do have some availability in the afternoons – slots that would be particularly suitable for after school activities.

The exterior painting has been completed and, much to the appreciation of some of our visitors, smart new chairs are now in place. On the downside, the basement was badly flooded in November which resulted in the boiler being temporarily out of action. Happily we now have an effective temporary solution but we have had to ask all those groups storing goods in the basement to remove them. The repair works will be covered by insurance but they may take some time to implement.

**Roads and traffic**

There is some good news to report. We have a new local Highways Team who are proving very helpful in responding to complaints that are received from the public. If you have any problems, these can be reported direct to the County Council either via their Report a Fault at [www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk) or by phone on 01243 642105. We are reliably informed that the best way to get action taken is to ensure that faults are reported by as many people as possible – the greater number of complaints, the higher the job goes in the 'to do' list.

The building of the new mini-roundabout by the London Lane junction at the Rose & Crown is promised before the end of this financial year. Although the Parish Council would have preferred to see a T-junction here, as there are concerns that the mini-roundabout will increase traffic in London Lane, it is recognised that with one mini-roundabout at The Copse, the second mini will do more

to slow down the traffic. No doubt that when the work is being done it will involve traffic lights and considerable delays in the High Street!

The Parish Council is pressing for action to be taken over the traffic speeds along Whiteman's Green. Fortunately/ unfortunately, there have not been enough serious accidents along this stretch of road to warrant the County Council doing any works. However, there is some funding available from the developers at The Copse and the go-ahead has been given for the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs (flashing 30 mph warning signs) at Whiteman's Green. Hopefully, the new parking for the rugby and football clubs will resolve the issue of vehicles parking along the road but, paradoxically, this could result in higher traffic speeds – there is no easy solution to any problem!

The 20 mph School Safety Zones are in the process of being installed and should be completed by the time this newsletter reaches you. Again, we hope these will reinforce the need for motorists to take extra care during school entry/exit times.

**Environment**

The committee is continuing to make progress with the gradual improvement in the conservation and wildlife habitat of the Observer Field, helped by a small flock of sheep from Oathall School Farm which very efficiently grazed the winter grass. Investigation is underway to look at working towards Local Nature Reserve status but further work will be needed to enable a full

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appreciation of the management requirements. The Parish Council is also pleased that the Royal Observer Post is being restored by some keen volunteers. It may be possible to arrange the occasional public opening in the future.

You will have noticed the new Christmas lights that went up this year. We are still limited to the four strands as there are no other suitable fixing points on adjacent buildings for any more lighting. Our thanks to those organisations who contributed towards the lights and particularly to Philip Turner from the Craft Shop for his generous donation.

### Cuckfield Youth Club

Cuckfield Youth Club is now open on Monday evenings 6.30pm to 8.30pm for school years 7 to 9, and on Thursday afternoons 3.30pm to 5.30pm for all young people aged 11 upwards. The youth worker in charge is Lisa, assisted by Harriet, and they extend an invitation to young people to meet them at the club. A variety of activities will be on offer and young people are involved in the planning of the future programme.

### Cuckfield Local

There's a new local group that's encouraging us all to 'think global and act local'. Taking inspiration from the past and planning for a greener future, Cuckfield Local is coming up with simple and interesting ways to tackle the challenges of climate change and peak oil. They say that if we all work together, villagers can make

Cuckfield more environmentally sustainable for the future.

The group is now organising a regular market selling local produce. This is proving very popular with residents and will now take place on the second Saturday of every month, outside The Talbot in the High Street. The group has lots of exciting ideas for future projects too, and is calling on us all to get involved in any way we can. Deborah Webb, one of the group members, says: "We hope that encouraging community based lifestyles will help make a better environment for our children and the village's future. Buying local, seasonal produce and using local resources whenever we can all helps."

Cuckfield Local would like as many people as possible to join in and come up with their own ideas – such as sharing skills and equipment, and sharing space to grow their own fruit and veg. So, if you'd like to know more or want to get involved, go to [www.cuckfield.org](http://www.cuckfield.org) or email [deborah.webb@talktalk.com](mailto:deborah.webb@talktalk.com) or [helenvintner@hotmail.com](mailto:helenvintner@hotmail.com)

### Something old, something new

The old and the new are combining nicely at Cuckfield Museum at the moment. Renowned for the discovery of dinosaur bones at Whiteman's Green, Cuckfield has always been an interesting place to visit, but if you go into the museum now you can actually hear those dinosaurs roaring again. Modern technology is a wonderful thing! You can sit and handle fossilised remains which were once a part of

a living roaming dinosaur and then look at all the information about them on the new touch screen, recently acquired to enhance the dinosaur display. If that is not quite your thing then come in and look at the new Information and Local Studies room which has been set up by the museum in conjunction with the Parish Council. There are computers giving internet access and many files and folders on all aspects of life in Cuckfield in the past. We have much information about local buildings and estates but we are always looking for more so if you can loan or donate any old photographs or documents about the house you live in we would be delighted to see you. Maps have much to offer the keen local historian so do come in and look at our collection and see how the area has changed over the years. Museum displays include one about the men from Cuckfield who went to fight in the Boer War. That has now paled into insignificance in comparison with the later world wars, but at the time it was a major conflict and those who died are commemorated on a memorial outside the Old School. Also on display are some of the recently repaired ceramics which were part of the original Bevan bequest to the museum. Currently closed for the winter, the museum will re-open on 13 February.

### Changes at Holy Trinity Church

Whilst the Parish Council is not involved in church matters, the building at Holy Trinity is a fine grade one listed building which essentially 'captures' much of the history and stories of our

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community over the last millennium. This huge building dominates the southern end of Cuckfield and whether you are a worshipper, a historian or simply someone looking for a place of tranquillity to meditate, it has a fundamental importance in our community.

Changes to the interior of the building will therefore be of interest to everyone, in varying degrees. The Parochial Church Council have informed the Parish Council that they are undertaking a study with the intention of re-ordering the interior of the church and, rather than basing any new design on the views of the few involved directly with the church, they seek the views of the whole community.

The last major re-ordering took place in the Victorian period and has served the community well for 150 years. To create a 'vision' of how the interior should be to last for the next 150 years is quite a challenge, but if you have a view or a keen interest in being involved please contact Colin Sewell-Rutter via the church office at [htcuckfield.churchoffice@virgin.net](mailto:htcuckfield.churchoffice@virgin.net)

## Cuckfield Cemetery

The old part of the cemetery is now full and we have moved into the Newbury Lane Section of the new burial ground. The Parish Council started to prepare for this move some 15 years ago.

Since then, the grounds which comprised part of the allotments have been levelled, seeded and planted. Currently this section provides a quiet and peaceful setting for the interment

of cremated remains where memorials can be placed to remember those whose remains lie within the cemetery.

It also houses Newbury Meadow Natural Burial Ground in the most south easterly part of the area, an area that has been provided to accommodate environmentally friendly burials within our own parish. Over the years this will become a wild flower meadow and a haven for butterflies, birds and all manner of wildlife, complementing the Newbury pond at the bottom of the lane.

The new general burial ground has been developed and designed to manage the personal wishes of the local community, encompassing all those above, and will continue to provide a very peaceful and well maintained facility for many years to come. A little information for anyone that may visit this – the young Wellingtonia tree in the middle of the new ground was planted in memory of our very own Gordon Stuart who, for many years until his death in November 2004, was the very dedicated caretaker of our lovely churchyard, and whose care today is now wonderfully undertaken by Dick Taylor.

Anyone who takes the time to walk through the churchyard cannot fail to see the most beautiful views of the South Downs in the distance. It is a truly wonderful backdrop to one of Britain's finest large churchyards.

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The Parish Council Office in the Queen's Hall is open from 10 am – 4 pm each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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