

Chairman: David de Saxe Tel: 01233 813456
Clerk: Mrs Jenny Oram Tel: 01227 700204
Priors, Church Lane, Waltham, Kent, CT4 5SQ.
Email: wye.parishclerk@btinternet.com

Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council



Dear Parishioners,

30 Sept 2007

Your new Parish Council

Your new Parish Council, elected in May this year, greets you at the end of its first four months. There are some old hands: Cllrs. John Morris, Peter Sutherland, Richard Bartley, Brian Roberts, Jack Woodford and David de Saxe survive from the last Council. New members are Cllrs. Don Thake, Terry Donovan, Errol Roberts (no relation to Brian), Paul Morris (no relation to John), and Jamie Clifford. Paul and Jamie are particularly welcome as members of the younger population of the village. We are all very sorry that we have no women on the Council: none of them would stand at the election. We hope that, if any vacancies arise during our term of office (up to May 2011), women candidates will come forward. It really is not appropriate that 50% of the community should not have any representatives on the Council.

At the risk of stating the obvious, we are here to represent and help the Community. Our names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail details, together with those of Jenny Oram, our clerk, are all to be found on the notice-boards outside the Library and Wye News. If there is anything you wish to bring to our attention, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. While there are some things we have power to do, there are others - such as matters to do with Highways and parking - where power lies with Kent County Council or with Ashford Borough Council, or, as in the case of the future of Wye Campus, lies ultimately with Imperial College. Nevertheless, we are fully committed to ensuring that local views are expressed and community concerns are raised, and we will do everything possible to influence decisions that will affect the well-being of our parish.

Traffic and parking in Wye

We are all aware of how congested the village can become. As I write,

- the good news is that Kent Highway Services is at last starting work on creating build-outs and safer pedestrian crossing points at the bottom of Bridge St. The junction with Churchfield Way will be up-graded and the camber corrected and pedestrian crossing points will be built further up Churchfield Way. The one-way system in Bridge St is also about to be extended to prevent drivers turning right when exiting the village hall car park.
- the bad news for Wye is that the County Council has introduced a new method for assessing proposed traffic management schemes throughout Kent. Out of 286 schemes assessed for 2008-09 Wye's traffic management and safety improvement project ranked 252. Only the top rated 126 schemes will be funded next year because the County cannot afford to pay for them all.

The Parish Council is now investigating what other funds it might access or raise itself (especially to improve parking arrangements) and whether Kent Highway Services and Ashford Borough Council will work in partnership with the Parish Council to effect some improvements. Meanwhile, the officer in charge of Gregory Court car park has made a verbal promise to white-line the car park during the current financial year and the Parish Council is seeking confirmation in writing in the hope that the work will be done and use of the car park can then be promoted among people who travel to Wye by car.

College-Village relations

The Parish Council last met with Professor Mike Jeger, Wye Campus Dean, in July. His update was subsequently published in the parish magazine, in the Wye Column in the Kentish Express and on www.wyeweb.org. Since then the decline of the College has continued to cause concern in the village and we have just heard that most of the College farm has been leased to a farmer from outside Wye. Already concerns are being voiced about the use to which the land will be put.

The Parish Council will be raising issues with Imperial College once the new academic year is underway and would like to hear from anyone with questions they would like answered. The Council's Chairman is also arranging a meeting with the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Kent. Parish councillors can't guarantee getting results, but they can try; and, most importantly, as your elected representatives they can make formal enquiries and representations on behalf of the *whole parish*, not just individual interest groups. So please keep in touch to help councillors work effectively.

Parish Plan update

As you all know, Phase 1 of the Parish Plan is in progress and there was a truly excellent response to the land-use questionnaire that was distributed throughout the parish in June. All the data from the completed questionnaires had to be entered into a computer programme that was specially devised for it, and this was a major task. A leaflet, summarising some of the results is about to be distributed, while members of the Steering Group continue to analyse the more complex data. The full results will be available soon and will be discussed at a public 'validation' event that the Steering Group is arranging. They will be used

- to establish the principles according to which the community wants the parish to develop in physical terms;
- to guide the parish's involvement in a workshop that Ashford Borough Council is planning to run in connection with the emerging Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document;
- to influence the planning of Phase 2 of the Parish Plan.

To be effective the Parish Plan process is bound to take time. However, the Parish Council firmly believes that it will be worthwhile in the end, because from it will emerge the community's vision for the future of Wye with Hinxhill Parish and this will provide a mandate for Council and community action in the years ahead. The high response to the recent questionnaire shows that people in the parish really do care about its future, so please – keep up your support and get involved as much as you can.

Affordable Housing in Wye

Another recent success has been the signing of a local lettings plan (by the Parish Council, Ashford Borough Council and Hyde Housing) for the seven rented affordable homes at Havillands in Bramble Lane. Three two-bedroom houses are now occupied, all by people with local connections. Four three-bedroom houses will become available in due course and will again be offered first to people with recognised housing needs who have registered with Ashford Borough Council and who have local connections. It is not too late to register with the Borough Council – the contact details are:
Tel: 01233 330688 – Email: housing@ashford.gov.uk

As your newly elected Council gets into its stride, please remember that your councillors welcome your views, your encouragement – as well as your complaints. Please don't hesitate to contact any one of us to help us do a better job for our community.

David de Saxe, Chairman.