

Neighbourhood Plans – a new approach to planning

The Localism Act, given Royal Assent in November last year and due to take effect in Spring 2012, gives Town and Parish Councils the ability to produce a Neighbourhood Plan ('NHP').

Why is this important? If all the necessary steps are achieved, the District Council must adopt the NHP, and it becomes a legal part of planning policy.

What is an NHP? It has been described as a tool for managing change. It can set out a vision for an area, and describe planning policies for the use and development of land. It is about local rather than strategic issues; it might cover where new shops, offices or homes would be acceptable, and what green spaces should be protected. The vision will cover the next 15 to 20 years.

How is an NHP produced? Until the Regulations come into force (probably May 2012) no formal stages can take place. The Parish Council has set up an NHP working group who are gathering evidence and doing preparatory work on the NHP. At the moment, the four villages are being looked at separately, and will then be drawn together as a Parish. Community engagement, with local businesses and individuals, will be the next step. The District Council must check for legal compliance, and carry out further 'pre-examination' public consultation. An Independent Examiner must approve the plan, and finally a referendum of residents of the NHP area will be held. If over 50% of the voters agree, the NHP will be adopted.

Can I get involved? Yes – an NHP will only have value if it reflects what the community wants. Look out for the meetings coming soon for local businesses, and later for individuals. Contact the Parish Council if you have any skills or interests you think could help us in preparing the NHP.

And watch this space!

Your Council

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Spring 2012

Handcross, Pease Pottage, Warninglid and Slaughtam

Slaughtam Parish Council

Welcome to Slaughtam Parish Council Spring Newsletter!

What is a Parish Council?

There are over 8,700 parish and town councils representing around 16 million people across England. A Parish Council is the first tier of local government and the closest to the community it serves and cover many rural and urban areas.

What does a Parish Council do?

Councillors are elected for four years at a time and an election is only held if there are more people wanting to be parish councillors than there are vacancies available. Vacancies occurring between elections are filled by bye-election (if requested) or co-option.

Each year the councillors choose a chairman from amongst their number. There is also a vice-chairman and a parish clerk, who is the Proper Officer and the Responsible Financial Officer of the council.

The Parish or Town council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of the local community. Their work falls into three main categories:

- representing your local community
- delivering services to meet local needs
- striving to improve quality of life in the parish

The range of services provided by parish councils varies enormously. Many provide allotments, look after playing fields, play areas and village greens. They maintain and look after public rights of way, bus shelters, public seats, small scale street lighting, and often provide village halls and meeting places. The Parish Council can do these things itself, or by helping someone else (such as a charity or volunteer group) to do them. Parish Councils have the power to improve the quality of community life by spending money on things which, in their opinion, are in the interests of the parish or its inhabitants.

The Parish Council will work with larger councils 'District and County Council' to agree which services they will be in charge of.

Parish Councils are also the focal point for local consultation on matters such as planning applications, strategic planning, schools and roads. On all these issues the parish councillors represent the parish's views to other authorities such as district and county councils.

Would you like to make a difference and help out in your community, why not join the Parish Council? Slaughtam Parish Council currently has Councillor vacancies would you like serve as a Councillor. If so please apply in writing or by email to the Clerk (details on the back), providing a brief background and why you would like to join the Council.

To qualify, a person must be a British subject, aged over 18 years old and an elector, must reside in, or within 3 miles of the Parish boundary or occupy as owner or tenant any land or premises therein, or have their principal or only place of work there, and must not be disqualified from holding office as a Councillor.

Mobile waste services – what future for “the freighter”?

The mobile waste service (aka ‘the freighter’) has visited the Parish for many years, funded by West Sussex County Council. In December 2011, the Parish Council was informed by WSCC that they would be withdrawing this financial support when the current round of services completes on 31 March 2012.

Previously the freighter has visited the Parish six times a year: three visits to Handcross, and three to Warninglid and Slaugham combined. We have been told that in future we can pay Mid Sussex District Council for the service – a cost to the Parish of over £300 per visit.

We have decided that the service is too important to the Parish to abandon, as it is particularly useful to older residents and those without cars. It also seems illogical to remove this service at a time that both District and County Councils want the villages and rural areas to be “sustainable” and provide services locally where possible. We will therefore pay for four visits (two to Handcross, two to Warninglid/Slaugham) in 2012/13. Towards the end of 2012 we will review how well the service is being used, and also whether Pease Pottage needs a visit. We are still in discussion with WSCC to try and get them to defer the decision for a year (to give us time to plan properly for the change), or perhaps contribute to our costs this year, as the withdrawal was announced after we had completed our budget/Precept setting process for 2012/13.

Let us know how important the freighter visits are to you and your neighbours. It is worth noting that a bulky waste collection service is available from MSDC (at a charge) for those who can't get to the Household Waste Recycling Sites, with concessions for those receiving council tax or housing benefits.



Planning

What's happening in your area? To keep informed you can register with your District Council Planning Portal.

MSDC website has recently been improved and it is now possible for residents to register with the 'online planning register' so that they receive a weekly e-mail about new planning applications and progress with current applications in their area. Please see attached link for further details <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/8085.htm>

About the Online Planning Register

The Online Planning Register allows you to view details of planning applications. You can:-

- Be notified by email of new applications in your ward or parish;
- Monitor the progress of an application or sign up for an email update;
- View documents for current applications;
- View lists of applications submitted and decided each week or month;
- See whether an appeal has been lodged and the result;
- Submit comments to the Council about applications

Site notices are only required in respect of applications for development of listed buildings, conservation areas, 'major' applications (usually 10 or more dwellings), 'departures' from the development plan and those which affect a public right of way.



Broadband in Rural Sussex

West Sussex – Better Connected, has been developed to provide both residents and businesses across the County with access to sustainable and high quality broadband.



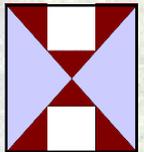
There is a total of £530m to be distributed between now and 2015. In order to gauge the need and therefore access to these funds for our Parish, we need to collect as much information as possible regarding the current availability of broadband and speeds people have access to.

You can support this program by using www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk to find out your 'download' and 'upload' speeds. Then phoning or e-mailing them along with your postcode to our Clerk or nearest Councillor. You can also enter them into the online form on our website, where you can also find more information on this subject.

If you are a business, expert or resident with a specific interest in this subject or think you can

Congratulations to Handcross Primary School!

Congratulations to Handcross Primary School who have been awarded an “Outstanding” rating following an Ofsted visit in 2011. Only 6% of Primary Schools have so far achieved this prestigious award in the entire country, and it is believed that they are the first Primary to achieve this standard in West Sussex.



The continuing success of the school must be down to the efforts of the Head, Mrs Gillian Pedersen, and her staff, an active and supportive Governing body, and not forgetting the contribution made by the children and their families. The outstanding rating was achieved despite the school having been through what has been described as the biggest period of change and growth in its 130+ year history. As West Sussex County Council have advised that the pressure on school places will continue, with the numbers of children likely to want a place here significantly greater by 2013, we can expect new pressures on the school, and perhaps further development on the site.

We would like to wish everyone involved continued success in the future.

Pease Pottage Residents' Association

Wow! There is life in the old dog yet, as the huge turnout for our first meeting of the revived association proved. It is good to know that there are so many community minded people, young and old, that want to put the heart and spirit back in to our village. The meeting showed Pease Pottage isn't as sleepy as some might think and that there is a real desire to help improve the quality of life for all villagers. This may be: socially – in the form of events such as quiz nights (watch out other villages in the parish, we plan an annual inter-village quiz!), book clubs, coffee mornings etc, or economically – by having a directory of local tradesmen and professionals we hope to keep the village 'in work', or environmentally – by seeing where the look and amenities of the village might be improved while ensuring that Pease Pottage remains the a rural village it is.

All Pease Pottage residents are welcome and encouraged to join, we would hate anyone to miss out on the Diamond Jubilee celebrations planned for the summer. Contact us ppra@btinternet.com or 07795 842 973.

We believe the heart of a village is very much in its people so come along and get involved, help make a difference within the community you live in!!