

# Hurst Village Society

*The object of the Society shall be to preserve and enhance the character of the Parish of Hurst as a living community*

**Newsletter No 70**

**May 2000**

## **KEEPING HURST GREEN**

One of the many reasons why people choose to live in Hurst is the beautiful environment, which is largely green, with many trees and hedges, open countryside, and community recreation areas.

Hurst Village Society is determined to keep Hurst green, and will be actively supporting the Parish Council in the development of a Village Plan to protect the green spaces in the village from damaging development, and to tackle environmental issues. **Read about Trees for the Millennium on page 4.**

H.V.S. will be represented on 1 June at the Informal Hearing planning appeal into the proposed “Organic” farm shop and distribution centre in Lodge Road. We will be objecting to the development on several grounds.

The Society also objected to the proposal by the Oracle Corporation to create a large residential training and conference centre at the former Sandford Farm to the west of the Old River Loddon. Although this proposal is in breach of the Local Plan, it has been approved by Wokingham District Council, and may be called in for examination by the Secretary of State.

**Turn to pages 2 and 3 for the latest information.**

## **Sandford Farm – Oracle Corporation**

Wokingham District Council has approved a modified plan for the Oracle Corporation to build a residential training centre on the Sandford Farm site. While H.V.S. is disappointed at this decision, it may be the least worst development on a site which was always going to be under threat. WDC has imposed a number of conditions aimed at minimising adverse effects on the surrounding area. The approved proposal breaches the Local Plan, so it has to go to the Secretary of State who may call it in for examination.

Oracle had been in discussions with WDC planners for several months seeking to meet local concerns, including those from the H.V.S. Firstly, it will bring increased traffic into the area - some 570 car parking spaces are planned, although Oracle will also “bus-in” people from Reading. Most of it is likely to come from the motorway system or from the Reading side of the river, but some will undoubtedly add to the traffic on the Sandford Lane rat-run.

Secondly, this area is still designated as “Countryside” in the Local Plan, and should not therefore be built on, unless there is good cause to do so. We felt that allowing this development would drive a coach and horses through the Local Plan and set a precedent, thus making it harder in the future to fight further such encroachments. WDC planning officers, however, are confident that the particular circumstances at Sandford Farm need not set a precedent for Hurst.

The centre will serve Oracle’s internal and customer training needs, and be complete with a “hotel” (originally 250 rooms, but now reduced to 100) to accommodate course participants, and a leisure centre which will be open to local residents outside normal training courses – mostly at weekends.

The plans show the training centre between the Old River and the Woodley Airfield estate, covering much the same area as the Hicks Persimmon housing proposal, which was rejected on appeal. There will be open space between the Old and New Rivers; the southern part will be designated Community Woodland, and the northern part Nature Reserve. There will be at least one footbridge linking this Community Woodland with the existing riverside footpath on the Hurst side of the river.

*Continued on page 3....*

## The Organic Farm

In the last issue, we wrote in some detail about the application to start an “organic farm” on the land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane, *writes John Lemon*. It was refused by WDC, and the applicants had appealed. Since then, the appeal has been “upgraded” to an informal hearing on 1<sup>st</sup> June at the WDC offices at Shute End.

Our thanks to those of you who wrote to the Planning Inspector earlier. The Society has also written to amplify and add to our original objections. (Incidentally, did you see the sheets of water across those fields when it rained in April – maybe it’s going to be an organic fish farm!) We shall be at the hearing to ensure that all the important issues are made known.

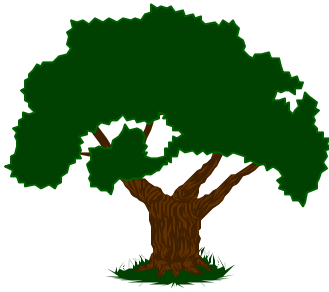
Briefly, this organic farm shop business is not appropriate for the site, which is designated a Setting of Settlement (of special significance in maintaining the landscape setting and/or the individual character of settlements). The majority of the goods sold at the shop would be brought in from elsewhere (some from abroad), and not grown on site.

The proposed mobile home would be both intrusive and unnecessary. Once building is established on such a site, it is easier to develop further, and we see such a proposal as a foot in the door for the future, and are therefore determined to fight the appeal.

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.....*Continued from page 2*

In addition, the landfill cells at Sandford Farm will be sealed, gas control and venting systems introduced, and a leachate management system installed to protect ground and surface water quality. This means there will be no excavation of waste from the *site* and removal to Lea Farm, which was one of our main objections to the Hicks Persimmon housing proposal.



Hurst was once a group of settlements in Windsor forest, but very few trees have survived into the new millennium. To help ensure that trees continue to be part of our living environment H.V.S. is joining forces with Trees For Our Future to plant long-lived native trees such as oak and ash to keep Hurst green.

Janet Spiller is leading this project which she hopes will see dozens of trees planted throughout the village this year. “Although the major part of the work will take place during National Tree Week in November, we are asking residents and landowners to look at their land during the spring to identify sites where they would like us to plant trees.

“We have teamed up with Reading wildlife groups who are taking part in the Trees For Our Future project. They have collected seeds from local trees and grown saplings in tree nurseries. These will be given free to us – provided we can find suitable sites for them. We would also like to hear from anyone who has native saplings in their gardens that they would like to see planted elsewhere,” said Janet.

H.V.S. would like to plant trees in parts of the village where most people will see and enjoy them – for instance, oaks in a hedgerow, a group of trees in a copse beside a footpath, or hazel trees in a front garden. “We hope that some people will want to sponsor a tree which they will look after,” said Janet.

“Once we have a list of sites, they will be put on a planting map and assessed by Wokingham District Council to make sure they will not obstruct underground services or overhead wires.”

If you would like to offer a tree-planting site, please call Janet on 0118 934 2438, or e-mail her at [janet.spiller@marks-and-spencer.com](mailto:janet.spiller@marks-and-spencer.com)

More information about how you can take part in the tree planting activities, and sponsor a tree - even if you are unable to have one in your own garden - will be published in future Newsletters.

**And on matters native and green...**



Did you know that you can find garden-worthy native flowers, trees and bushes for Hurst through the Internet?

The Postcode Plants Database, also known as the Flora-for-Fauna database, is available via the Natural History Museum web-site. Go to: <http://fff.nhm.ac.uk/fff-bin/glob> to find out that the Loddon Lily is not the only local native plant for RG10 addresses.

## Village Gardens Competition

If you enjoy your garden, then maybe you should be entering the Village Garden Competition! Entry forms are available in the Village shops and from John Lemon (934 3889). Judging will take place during May.

Judges will be interested to see how people have made their gardens suitable for their purpose – that could include creating a children's play area, making somewhere to sit in the sun and enjoy the view, and developing a flourishing vegetable patch, as well as flower displays.

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### **IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.....**

Details of the Hurst Horse Show and Fayre on 24 and 25 June, the Village Library, how you can become involved in creating the Hurst Village Plan, and more information about how you can publish information on the Hurst Village Society web-site.

**Plus** the view from Shute End – Councillor Annette Drake's update on Hurst issues, including traffic calming measures in Davis Street.

## **A message from the Chairman**

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the main reasons why people choose to live in Hurst is the environment. The primary aim of the Village Society is to preserve and enhance the character of Hurst as a living community.

However, to do this effectively we need to speak with a strong voice, which we can only do if we have a full and representative membership. Therefore, if protecting the character of the village is important to you, I urge you to join the Village Society by completing the membership form opposite and returning it to any member of the Committee listed on the back page of this Newsletter.

We also still have a few vacancies on the Committee itself so if you wish to become more actively involved we would love to hear from you.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Village Society is now on-line. Our Internet web site, which contains information about the Society, its rules, as well as other information about the village can be found at <http://www.hvs.org.uk>.

Ultimately, the site will be linked to the web site being set up by the Parish Council. In the meantime, we would very much welcome your thoughts on the content and style of the site. So, if you have access to the Internet, why not visit the site and let us know what you think by e-mailing either Duncan Kendall at [duncan@bdksoil.co.uk](mailto:duncan@bdksoil.co.uk) or myself at [david.shapland@btinternet.com](mailto:david.shapland@btinternet.com).

# Hurst Village Society

## Membership Application/Renewal Form

Please complete Section A, then **either** Section B **or**, if you wish to pay by Standing Order, Section C

### A

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No

### B

I enclose my cheque/cash for £5.00, being my subscription for 2000. I also enclose a donation of £..... to the Hurst Village Society

### C

To: My Bank:

Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sort code

\_\_\_\_\_

Please debit my Account, No

\_\_\_\_\_

with the sum of £5.00, being my subscription to the Hurst Village Society, and credit Account No 1349706 (Hurst Village Society No 1 Account) at Lloyds TSB Bank plc, High Street, Bracknell, Berks RG12 1BT  
Sort Code 30-91-11

Date of first payment: Immediately

Date of second payment: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2001

And thereafter annually on 1<sup>st</sup> January

Signature

Date

## Hurst Village Society Committee Members

Kevin Cottrell	St Swithins Cottage, Hinton Road	0118 934 3087	Health
Fernando Esteve	Sandford, Lodge Road	0118 934 4364	
Trevor Gaylard	Gatcombe House, Forest Road	01344 428865	
Martin Kearsley	Old Forge House, The Street	0118 923 0624	
Duncan Kendall	6 Tape Lane <a href="mailto:duncan.kendall@bdksol.com">duncan.kendall@bdksol.com</a>	0118 934 2852	
John Lemon	The Old Pound, Whistley Green <a href="mailto:john@lemons.force9.co.uk">john@lemons.force9.co.uk</a>	0118 934 3889	Planning
Timothy Savill	Pikes Farm House, Forest Road <a href="mailto:timothysavill@cs.com">timothysavill@cs.com</a>	0118 978 3280	Treasurer
David Shapland	1 Hurst Grove Cottages, Davis Street <a href="mailto:david.shapland@btinternet.com">david.shapland@btinternet.com</a>	0118 934 2209	Chairman Millennium
Janet Spiller	3 Hogmoor Lane <a href="mailto:janet.spiller@marks-and-spencer.com">janet.spiller@marks-and-spencer.com</a>	0118 934 2438	Environment
Brian Thomas	The Retreat, Forest Road	01344 453256	
Wendy Tobitt	17 Martineau Lane <a href="mailto:wendy.tobitt@syntegra.bt.co.uk">wendy.tobitt@syntegra.bt.co.uk</a>	0118 934 2381	Editor
Sheila Whittaker	Apple Tree Cottage, Hogmoor Lane	0118 932 1937	
Ex-officio:			
WDC Councillor Annette Drake	Walden Acres, Wokingham Road <a href="mailto:annette.drake@virgin.net">annette.drake@virgin.net</a>	0118 934 1036	

*Published by the Hurst Village Society.*

*Chairman: David Shapland, 1 Hurst Grove Cottages, Hurst, Tel: 0118 9342209*