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

Newsletter No 74

February 2001

HAVE YOUR SAY AT VILLAGE SOCIETY A.G.M.

The Hurst Village Society Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 2 March starting at 8pm in the Large Village Hall. This will be your opportunity to discuss village issues that you are concerned about with Village Society Committee members.

It is also our opportunity to recruit new people onto the Committee. This year three of the Committee will be standing down, and one of them - John Lemon - has announced that he will not be standing for re-election.

John's decision comes after six years stalwart service to HVS, and thankfully he will continue to play an active role on the Parish Council. John has been the HVS planning specialist, and his departure leaves a vacancy for someone with a keen interest and knowledge of planning matters.

We are also looking for a Treasurer, as Tim Savill will be relinquishing this role after two years at the abacus. If you are interested in either of these roles, or would like to join the Committee anyway, please complete the relevant form inside this Newsletter. If you have any questions about joining the Committee please ring the Chairman, David Shapland, or speak to any committee member – their names are on the back of this newsletter.

The AGM will start at 8pm with a review of the year's activities from the Chairman David Shapland, reports from Committee members and our district councillor Annette Drake, and question and answer session. Light refreshments will follow this open discussion.

Forms for HVS Membership Application and Renewal, and Nomination for the Committee are inside this Newsletter.

St Nicholas' Church News

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the Hurst Millennium St Nicholas' Day service such an enjoyable and memorable occasion – from the torch-lit procession to the church to the refreshments and entertainment back at the village hall *writes the Rev Douglas Loveridge*.

As Vicar, it was truly a wonderful sight to look back down Church Hill to see the procession of light from torches held by 300+ villagers. Many people have commented on the wonderful sense of community and the warm atmosphere in the church, which was filled to capacity. The service was a unique celebration of life in our village community and a great prelude to the Christmas festivities.

We were pleased to welcome many people to the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eve family service and Midnight Mass. For many, these services and our Sunday Club's Nativity Play are the essence of Christmas celebrations. We intend to install amplification in the church in the coming months to overcome any audibility problems that we regret some people experienced this year.

Details of all services at St Nicholas' and St Mary's can be found in the window of the village Post Office and in the parish magazine sold there. Special forthcoming services include:

- 11 February 3 pm Marriage Dedication Service (St Mary's) renewal of vows
- 24 March 7 pm Organ Recital by Nigel Ogden with refreshments, tickets £8
- 25 March 11 am Mothering Sunday a special family service.
- $8\ April\ 11\ am$ Palm Sunday with procession from the vicarage at 10.45am
- 13 April 2 pm Good Friday an hour at the Cross
- 15 April 11 am Easter Sunday celebration

For further information or spiritual guidance please call Rev. Douglas Loveridge (Vicar) on 0118 934 0017

You can help your local playgroup raise cash by shopping on the Internet

St Nicholas Pre-school Playgroup has been registered for a new Internet scheme called **go-help.co.uk**. This will enable cash from purchases made through an Internet virtual shopping centre to be donated directly to the playgroup.

We would be grateful for your support in using this service to raise funds for the benefit of the 40 or so local children who attend the playgroup. Money raised would be used to buy all the extras that make our village playgroup such a happy and stimulating place for the underfives writes Louise Kendall on behalf of St Nicholas Pre-school Playgroup Committee.

go-help.co.uk is an Internet virtual shopping centre where you can purchase anything from books and CDs to food and the latest fashions – and get it all delivered directly to your door. When you shop on go-help.co.uk, a proportion of the purchase cost goes to the playgroup as a cash donation – at no extra cost to you.

It couldn't be simpler – all you need to do is visit the web site at www.go-help.co.uk and nominate the playgroup by quoting our name. Then you can start shopping, safe in the knowledge that a percentage of the cost of everything you buy will be donated for playgroup's benefit.

The scheme has received support from the DfEE, UK LEAs, the Scottish Executive Education Department, the Department for Education for Northern Ireland and the National Assembly for Wales Education Department.

Some of you may not have access to a computer at home but you may be able to use a friend's computer, or you could try the local library or Internet café. If you have questions further details are available on the website at www.go-help.co.uk or through e-mail to info@go-help.co.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article. Please help us to raise money for our playgroup by spreading the word, telling your friends and family about go-help.co.uk and how the service works.

THE VIEW FROM SHUTE END.....

District Councillor Annette Drake reports

Dorndon House

Following the refusal of the application for the demolition and replacement building for 12 apartments, Thirlstone Homes submitted an amended application for the demolition and the erection of 10 apartments which was allowed by the Development sub-committee following a site visit. The only gain being that the ridge height was reduced. Thanks to all who wrote letters, spoke and attended the meeting.

We are now faced with ROUND 3

Thirlstone Homes' appeal against the refusal of the first application for the 12 apartments to be heard on **Tuesday 27th February starting at 10am** at Wokingham District Council offices at Shute End. The appeal will be an informal local hearing with people attending sitting round a table. The planning officer, Mrs Polnik, will put the Council's case. The developer's representative will speak in support of the appeal. Anyone can attend this appeal, the Inspector will ask for your names and whether you wish to speak. You do not have to speak, but you may add to the Council's evidence if you wish. The hearing usually ends at lunchtime when the Inspector will then make a site visit, and we can accompany him. The Inspector will write his report and this will be sent to all those who have written to the Inspectorate on this matter.

Now for the good news *Village Speed Limits*.

At the last meeting of the Highways Committee a resolution was agreed to reduce village road speeds to 30 miles an hour, *but*, only within identified settlements. For Hurst this means on the A321. However, as the DETR has difficulty in defining the term "village", we are told that it is possible for the District to alter speed limits in villages *if* this is consistent with national & local policy! In other words we shall be looking at speed limits on all village roads.

BUT, the following constraints have been pointed out: **No funding** has been identified within the Council's Five Year Local Transport Plan bid, and the cost of implementing measures to reduce vehicle speeds *sympathetic to the environment* are likely to be significant. **20 mph zones** and limits outside schools, can be funded through Safer Routes to Schools Programme because, again, there is no provision in the Council's Local Transport Plan

New footway on Lodge Road.

The proposed footway from Nursery Close to Sawpit Road may be implemented in March. The Council will be consulting local residents and the Parish Council, and if there are no significant objections the work will start in a few weeks.

Hurst Village Society Nomination for Membership of the General Committee 2001 - 2002

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

Hurst Village Society General Committee meets each month to discuss issues associated with planning, the environment, transport and other public services in the village that are related to the aims of the Society given below. The Committee is associated with running the annual Dinner Dance, managing the Denis Eastwood Library, and organising other events such as Archery at the Hurst Horse Show. The HVS produces a Newsletter, which is published at least four times a year and contains information about village events and activities other than those of the Village Society.

The aims of the Society include:

- to protect the physical character and rural environment
- to provide an independent focal point for the community
- to encourage involvement in village activities
- to promote the use of the amenities in the village
- to encourage a spirit of neighbourliness
- to foster communication between members of the community

The General Committee consists of no more than 15 members who elect their officers including: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Social Secretary. Other responsibilities include Planning, Environment, Health and Newsletter Editor. Each year of third of the committee members stand down and may offer themselves for reelection.

Nomination for Membership of the General Committee 2001 – 2002			
Nominee	Proposed by		
Name	Name		
	Address		
	Telephone		
Signature Date	Signature Date		

Hurst Village Society Membership Application/Renewal Form

Membership of the Hurst Village Society is renewable on 1st January every year. The current annual subscription is £5.00 per household.

Please complete Section A, then **either** Section B, **or** if you wish to pay by Standing Order, Section C. If you choose to play by Standing Order, please consider making a donation as well, thank you.

Section A
NameAddress
PostcodeTelephone
Section B
I enclose my cheque/cash for £5.00 being my subscription for 2001. I also enclose a donation for £to the Hurst Village Society.
Section C
To: My Bank: Name
Sort code
Please debit my account, number
SignatureDate

Biodiversity and wildlife news

Wokingham District Council's Countryside Service has asked members of local conservation and community groups to get together to work on a new Biodiversity Action Plan. The aim is to safeguard the future of the species and habitats in this area and restore what has been lost in the past. HVS is representing Hurst on the 'Towns and Villages Habitat Group'.

Once complete, the action plan should be formally adopted by Wokingham District Council. This will enable the council to promote wildlife friendly management of our public green spaces, ponds, and churchyards. It will also ensure that biodiversity is taken into account at the design stage of any new developments. Action plans are being simultaneously developed for other habitats such as woodlands and grasslands. This is good news for endangered species such as the barn owl, song thrush, bullfinch, otter, great crested newt and water vole.

Newts

The Countryside Service is planning a major survey of ponds in the area during the spring. As Hurst is fortunate in having many old ponds, they would be very interested to hear about those that are known to contain newts or have done so in the past. Please contact Andy Glencross at the Countryside service on 9342016

What's on at Dinton Pastures

To contribute to National Nestbox week - 14 - 21 February, the following events are taking place during February:

Build a box for birds - Sunday 18 February Three 1hour sessions at 10am, 12noon and 2pm. Places must be booked in advance with the Countryside Service on 0118 9342016

Homes for wildlife - Sunday 25 February 11am -3pm Learn how to make your garden a wildlife friendly part of the countryside. Have a go at making nestboxes, bird tables and bird feeders. Help the rangers create a new pond. There will be many other attractions on the day.

VILLAGE SURVEY IN FEBRUARY FOR PARISH DESIGN STATEMENT

Scores of Hurst residents will be on the roads, footpaths and bridleways of Hurst during February taking photographs and making notes of all they see that evokes the character of the village and parish of Hurst.

This is the first public stage of the creation of the Parish, or Village, Design Statement which is being organised by St. Nicholas Hurst Parish Council with the support of Hurst Village Society.

The Parish Design Statement, when completed, will be recognised by Wokingham District Council as an important planning document to be consulted and used as guidance when considering new development in the parish. Howard Larkin who is leading the Design Statement Working Group is careful to point out that "Parish" and "Village" are one and the same for the purposes of this work.

"The final document will be a comprehensive statement of the village or parish character," explained Howard Larkin. "It will include the siting, scale, mass of buildings and the context in which they are set. Of course we will cover the landscape of Hurst, the ponds, fields, trees and open spaces between the areas of settlement."

The survey timetable

Around 40 volunteers will be taking to the highways and byways of the parish to cover the three electoral wards of the village - Village, Ashridge and Davis Street - to complete the survey during February, and return their photographs and notes to the Working Group on 5 March.

During April the Working Group will publish a first draft of the Design Statement and invite residents of Hurst and Wokingham District Council planning officers to make comments and suggestions. This feedback will be considered for inclusion in the second draft, which will also be available for public consultation.

By September the Working Group intends to have completed the consultation. They will involve the District Council planners during this stage to ensure that the final draft will meet planning laws and is likely to receive recognition by the planning authority. The Parish Design Statement should be published in December this year so that it can be implemented as quickly as possible.

Why we need a Parish Design Statement

Wokingham District Council is under great pressure from central Government to find suitable land for 7,750 new homes to be built before 2006. This is a daunting target and comes about because of the DETR refusal to allow most of these homes to be built on sites south of the M4 in the parishes of Shinfield, Swallowfield and Grazeley as WDC had originally intended.

This means that villages and towns in WDC are now under pressure to accommodate as many of the 7,000+ homes as possible. Hurst has had considerable new development in the past 10 years, mostly within the Settlement i.e. within the centre of the village. The parish of Hurst is made up small hamlets and settlements that together comprise the largest parish (in acreage) in the District. Undoubtedly, developers will be looking at ways in which they can infill and join up the hamlets and settlements.

With the Parish Design Statement to hand, giving authoritative and knowledgeable guidance about the local character, diversity and environment, Wokingham District Council can ensure that new developments are designed and constructed in a way that is sympathetic with the local character and environment.

Unique character of Hurst

Most people who live in Hurst choose to do so because they value the unique character of the village - or parish - with its trees and open fields between settlements of houses. The diversity of Hurst, from Whistley Green in the north to Forest Road in the south, the River Loddon at the western boundary and Straight Mile on the east takes in a variety of landscapes, building styles, and features.

Inevitably there will be some changes to Hurst during the coming years. New homes will be built, farmers will want to erect new buildings, people will want to extend and alter their homes.

Whatever the scale and type of new development, the Parish Council believes that two important principles apply. These are: new buildings should follow in the traditions of their setting, reflecting the important characteristics that make each locality special and different from other places; standard designs, which could belong in any suburb or industrial estate are not appropriate in the countryside. (continued overleaf......)

(.....from previous page)

How the survey is being done

Teams of people have been organised to survey the parish; each team has been given one of the electoral wards. The survey will include: an exploration of the values that we ascribe to different parts of the village buildings and spaces; and a description of the things we see around the parish which are important in creating its individual character.

Some people will be looking at the village as though they are seeing it for the first time. They have been asked to design a route for a visitor so that they get a clear and honest impression of what Hurst is like. Others will use their local knowledge to photograph and note examples of the diversity and character of the parish. Landmarks such as trees, the Church, particular hedges, buildings, a wall, decorative sign or even topiary will be recorded.

The Parish Council has funded the survey, and provided the volunteers with film and maps. Photographs taken during February may not necessarily appear in the final document, as the Working Group intends to commission a photographer to take pictures for publication.

Once completed, the survey photographs will be collated under the headings of Landscape, Settlement Pattern and Spaces, and Buildings. Notes of people's views and feelings about the character of Hurst which help to describe the photographs will contribute to the statement. These will be brought together at the next meeting on Monday 5 March.

Hurst is not alone in creating a Parish Design Statement. Wargrave produced one a few years ago which the parish council says has been helpful in ensuring that new development is in tune with the character of the village. Design Statements are used as planning guidance in environmentally sensitive areas such as the Cotswolds, Cambridgeshire, and the Peak District. In the past 30 years Hurst has had village statements, but they did not have the recognition or authority that the Parish Design Statement will.

If you would like to take part in the survey, or contribute in any other way to the Parish Design Statement please contact one of the organisers: Howard Larkin 0118 934 2172, or howard@larkinassoc, freeserve.co.uk, or to John Lemon 0118 934 3889 or john@lemons.force9.co.uk.

MORE PLANNING MATTERS

Proposed Farm on Lodge Road/Tape Lane

No sooner was the ink dry on the Inspector's report dismissing the appeal against WDC's refusal of the organic farm last year than the landowners themselves, Luff Farms, submitted new plans for a Farm Shop on land between Lodge Road and Tape Lane. HVS indicated their objections to this proposal and provided village residents with information.

However, at the beginning of February the District Council planners announced that the submission was invalid because elevations of the proposed poly-tunnels were not submitted. The council has also requested further information regarding the use of the agricultural building, the nature of the goods to be sold in the farm shop and number of employees. No further action will be taken until this information is received.

Through repeated applications over several years Luff Farms has indicated that it will try to develop this land. HVS will continue to oppose the proposal because it contravenes the Loddon Area Local Plan (Setting of Settlement) which requires that open spaces such as that between Whistley Green and Wards Cross should remain so, and the policy on farm shops. The emerging Wokingham District Local Plan lays out new policies on farm shops which include no adverse impact on existing village shops, no intensification of activity on the site, and no new buildings.

The Parish Council is also opposing the plans, and District Councillor Annette Drake will speak against them on the grounds of possible damage to our village shops.

The pillar-box red fence in School Road.

Thirlstone Homes has surrounded the Dorndon House site in a bright red two-metre high security fence. This has further angered local residents who asked District Councillor Annette Drake to take the matter up to get the colour changed. Apparently the Council is unable to request the developers to change the colour so the only course of action is to write to Thirlstone Homes and request that the fence be repainted – dark green might be appropriate. Address your letters to: Managing Director of Thirlstone Homes West Ltd,

Thirlstone House

Shute End

Wokingham RG41 BX

HURST HORSE SHOW STAYS IN THE VILLAGE

The new Hurst Horse Show Committee has taken over the reins of the former organisation which has run the show successfully for 21 years, and can scotch all the rumours that the show might move away from the village.

The event will take place this year on 23 and 24 June - the usual last weekend of the month - and on the usual location, the fields between St. Nicholas School and the Village Halls. "We are very grateful to Mrs Jo Walker-Robson for her continued support of the Horse Show by making the land available to us," explained David Lochman, chairman of the new show committee.

This year the show committee is planning to expand the country craft fayre so that in addition to the usual displays of woodturning and pottery, we hope to have a new area dedicated to displays of traditional country crafts such as hedge-laying, blacksmithing, and basket making. Anyone who would like to take part in this or any other area of the show should contact a committee member - details at the foot of this article.

Hurst Horse Show is one of the most popular annual village events which attracts people of all ages. The weekend is a lovely mixture of a horse show combined with a country fayre where local people are able to set up an stall, exhibit (and sell) their wares. There are also many ring attractions apart from the show-jumping, pony and horse classes. These include birds of prey, dog agility, Appalachian dancers, Hurst's own Morris Dancers (HUMP), terrier racing and much more.

As for children's entertainment, most parents in the village know that the Hurst Horse Show weekend is the village highlight of their year. There will be a children's games corner organised by teachers and staff from St. Nicholas School, and other attractions including coconut shies, archery (organised by Hurst Village Society), bouncy castle, tug of war, and steam traction engine.

The proceeds of the Show benefits St. Nicholas Church of England Primary School and many local groups and charities including:

Hurst Library Opens Its Doors

We are pleased to report that the Village Library, which is founded on the generous bequest of the late Denis Eastwood, is now open for business, albeit initially from a temporary home in our Chairman's garage.

The wide range of Mr Eastwood's interests are reflected in the 527 books available – from archeology through ancient history, the classics, gardening, military history, music, natural history, philosophy and travel. A full list of the books - all catalogued by David Shapland - is distributed with this Newsletter. Additional copies of the list are also available from key locations around the village, and a copy has been posted on our web site (www.hvs.org.uk).

If you want to borrow a book, you simply need to 'phone David Shapland on 0118 9342209 and arrange to collect it. Initially, we are proposing that books can be borrowed for a four week period and that there will be a limit of three books per individual at any time. If the Library is well supported, our intention is to move it to a more permanent home, possibly in the Village Hall, later in the year.

Hurst Horse Show continued from previous page.......

the Pre-School Playgroup, Hurst Scout Troop, the Over 60s club, the Village Halls, the Red Diamonds and many other worthy causes.

The new Horse Show Committee would like to reiterate their thanks to the previous committee for all their hard work. Some of the committee members had been there since the start of the modern Horse Show 21 years ago. The results of their labours have made the show into what it is today and they have raised tens of thousands of pounds for the local community.

Look out for more information on the Horse Show web site www.hurst-horse-show.co.uk being created by Kevin O'Rourke, a parent from St. Nicholas School.

Anyone who is interested in setting up a stall or an attraction should contact Jan or Richard Hiles on 0118 9340704. All general enquiries should be directed to David Lochman on 0118 9341205.

Update on Village Youth Project

Subsequent to our appeal in the December issue of the Newsletter we were heartened by a very positive response from local teenagers and volunteers, helped by Chris Pape, the Wokingham District Council street worker, *writes Parish Council chairman Jan Martin*.

A meeting was held to allow everyone to discuss issues of concern – the main frustration for teenagers is that there is nowhere in Hurst for them to meet. A shelter would probably be most suitable, and we have looked into the design and costs of such a building. These were discussed at a meeting on 6 February.

The other suggestion made was to hire the JAC van, a mobile youth centre, once a fortnight. Teenagers had enjoyed this facility when it was available on two occasions last summer. The van is currently being refurbished and the Parish Council will investigate the possibility of it coming to Hurst for a trial period to see if local 11 – 17 year old teenagers would be interested in using it. Adult volunteers will also be required to help plan and run these sessions. Anyone interested in helping this very worthwhile project should contact Jan Martin on 0118 9342851.



Poppy Appeal will rise with Band Concert

The South Lake Concert Band from Woodley will be in blowing up a storm on 30 March in the Large Village Hall to raise money for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Hurst's Poppy Appeal total now stands at £2,904 this year (which is due to end on 31May), and the concert is sure to take this figure over £3,000.

Tickets for the Concert are £5 and can be bought from George Claridge, David Bye or any other RBL Committee member. The Concert will start at 7.30pm and will include popular classics, music from the shows, and popular military music including The Dambusters March, Wings, and The British Grenadier.

If you would like to collect for the Poppy Appeal, please contact George Claridge on $0118\,9340135$

Hurst Gospel Hall News

We held several Christmas services and were delighted to welcome many people from the village, some of whom joined us for the first time, *writes Rachel Simms*. The new Tuesday Club for children, held each week during term time at 6.15 – 7.15 pm has proved very popular, as was their Christmas Party on January 20.

We would be pleased to welcome any ladies to our special evenings on the first Wednesday of each month at 8.00 pm. These evenings always include a short Bible talk. Our next Sunday Special will be on April 8 at 4.00 pm when we will be considering the great truths of Easter. The meeting will be followed by tea.

As always we give a warm welcome to everyone who joins our services:

Sundays: 9.30 am Sunday School and Bible Class

6.30 pm Gospel Meeting

Tuesdays: 6.15 pm Tuesday Club

7.45 pm Bible Teaching and Prayer

For further information contact David and Rachel Simms 0118 9772071, John and Cath Barton 0118 9775489 or Nigel and Norah Thomas 0118 9667239

JOIN THE ANNUAL VILLAGE CLEAN UP!

We are all concerned about the amount of litter accumulating around the village – some of it washed out of ditches in the recent flooding – so please support the Annual Village Clean-Up on Saturday 24 March. Report to the Large Village Hall between 9 am and 12 noon to collect safety tabards, litter pickers and sacks will be provided. Please use your own gloves and stout waterproof footwear

HVS NEWS IN BRIEF.

Committee meetings will be held on the following dates. 28 February, 4 April. **The AGM will be held on 2 March in the Large Village Hall.** If you would like to raise any issue at these meetings, please contact a committee member listed on the back page.

The next HVS Newsletter will be published early in May If you would like to publicise events and activities of a Village-based organisation or group in the next HVS Newsletter, please contact Wendy Tobitt on 0118 9342381. Copy deadline is 23 April.

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 duncan.kendall@	6 Tape Lane bdksol.com	0118 934 2852	
John Lemon john@lemons.fo	The Old Pound, Whistley Green rce9.co.uk	0118 934 3889	Planning
Timothy Savill timothysavill@c	Pikes Farm House, Forest Road s.com	0118 978 3280	Treasurer
David Shapland david.shapland@	1 Hurst Grove Cottages, Davis Street btinternet.com	0118 934 2209	Chairman
Janet Spiller janetspiller@hot	3 Hogmoor Lane mail.com	0118 934 2438	Environment
Brian Thomas	The Retreat, Forest Road	01344 453256	
Wendy Tobitt wendy.tobitt@sy	17 Martineau Lane vntegra.bt.co.uk	0118 934 2381	Editor
Sheila Whittaker	Apple Tree Cottage, Hogmoor Lane	0118 932 1937	

Ex-officio:

WDC Councillor Annette Drake, Walden Acres, Wokingham Road 0118 934 1036 annette.drake@virgin.net

Published by the Hurst Village Society. Chairman: David Shapland, 1 Hurst Grove Cottages, Hurst, Tel: 0118 9342209 (www.hvs.org.uk)