



# Crowborough News

For your diary:

**CROWBOROUGH ANNUAL TOWN CONFERENCE - 7.30pm  
Wednesday 4th March, All Saints New Church Centre.**

## A message from the Mayor

The past year has been very busy for the Town Council. The full council meetings, which take place every two months have had a very varied agenda. The five committees which meet on a regular basis have achieved a great deal during the year, with many projects being completed and successful events arranged.

All the town's events were well supported this year with record numbers attending the firework display. The weather was kind to us in December and the annual turning on of the Christmas lights turned our high street into an illuminated Christmas scene. The whole event with its street entertainers and colourful stalls was enjoyed by everyone and the children loved Santa's grotto. Personally, it was wonderful to meet and talk to people who were having fun and to sample some of the food on sale.

The solemn event of Remembrance Day was well attended. I found it very emotional to lay a wreath on behalf of Crowborough and to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for us all.

The 70th commemoration service for the Canadian servicemen who lost their lives in Crowborough was held at the Memorial on the golf course in July. It was humbling to meet so many of the families who had travelled from Canada for the service and to be asked to read a prayer.

During the year I have been fortunate to be invited by many local groups to attend various events. The dedication by the volunteers who run these groups without recognition shows that people do really care. This especially

shows in the volunteers who run groups for young people and after visiting the Scouts and Air Cadets I was amazed at what these young people had achieved.

One of my two charities this year is the High Weald Dementia Social Group who help families who are caring for relatives with Dementia. I have been fortunate to attend some of their outings and social functions and to talk to some of the carers. The volunteers who run the group can only be praised for their work.

My other charity this year is the Crowborough First Responders who work alongside the Ambulance service to bridge the gap between a 999 call and the ambulance arriving on the scene.

This group of dedicated people give their time free to help those in need and are a worthy charity.

As always donations are collected each year for the Mayor's charities and this year the sum exceeds £3000.

As Mayor of Crowborough I have been asked to attend a number of 100th birthday celebrations in the town's care homes and I attended a 105th birthday. The number of residents over 100 is far greater than I realised and shows what a healthy place Crowborough is to live.

In March 2015 we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of our twinning with the town of Horwich. The Mayor of Horwich travelled to Crowborough in December to attend our Civic Carol service and to start the discussions on how to celebrate the 25th anniversary.

I have since reciprocated by travelling to

*A message from the Mayor continued...*

Horwich to finalise the arrangements.



The latest round of Government spending cuts have started to have an effect on our town with the County Council now cutting back on the services they provide to us. This sadly will be detrimental to the appearance of our town and can already be seen by the state of the road signs and hedges.

The restrictions on development imposed by Wealden District Council on Crowborough and

its neighbouring parishes has taken effect. The Planning and Development Committee have now seen a huge increase in the number of extensions to existing houses, rather than new homes.

Wealden District Council still has the 300 house allocation for Crowborough on sites identified but further development is restricted due to Crowborough's proximity to the Ashdown Forest.

Finally, I would like to thank the Town Council staff for their hard work and commitment in the efficient running of the council. Thanks also to my wife Lyn for all her support and understanding during a busy year as Mayor.

- Cllr Ron Reed

## Environment Report

The Environment Committee has a diverse agenda which is reflected in my report. We have accomplished a great deal this year despite our budget being cut to the bone. The impact of the cuts to Wealden and East Sussex County Council budget has impinged on our ability to keep up the appearance of Crowborough. From last year ESCC no longer provide Village Maintenance and this has led to major road signs becoming unreadable. We are now looking at our resources and budget to see how the Town Council can fill this gap.

I thank all the members of the Environment Committee for their hard work and the amount of time they have given this year. Their reports to the committee from outside meetings are paramount when the Committee is making decisions.

Once again I thank Philippa Hewes and her staff for the efficient and helpful way that they have kept up with the workload generated from this Committee and the extra work by way of the cuts from other Councils.

Our aim is to keep Crowborough a clean, safe and attractive town in which to live.

### Planting

Great work was carried out by David Foot and his ground staff when the committee decided to give Clokes Corner a facelift.



The two large trees which showed signs of damage will be replaced in the spring and all dead shrubbery has been removed and replaced by new shrubs and two hanging basket trees. The favourable comments on the town's planting generally reflects how much it means to residents, especially those who do not have gardens of their own.

We are always open to suggestions for the planting of our anniversary beds at Chapel Green.

### Strengthening Local Relationships

#### Highway Issues

East Sussex County Council no longer fully funds all projects put forward by Parish and Town Councils. Any project that meets ESCC criteria will be part funded by ESCC and the balance of the cost has to be sourced by Parish

*Environment Report continued...*

and Town Councils. The town has successfully sourced part funding to improve the lighting at Jarvis Brook crossing.

At the last SLR meeting the Town Council put forward requests from residents to reduce the speed limit in Beacon Road to 30 miles an hour, provide a crossing in Beacon Road/Church Road area, and extend the 30mph from the Town to Goldsmith Recreation Ground.

The condition of major road signs and implication of cleaning groups e.g neighbourhood watch was discussed ( Health and Safety prohibits this ) Traffic and parking on Crowborough Hill and the closing of Hookstead Day Care and implications for users were also put forward.

Reclamation of footpaths is an ongoing issue as many footpaths are being eroded by overgrowth from garden trees or grass and weeds. ESCC said that footpaths will be cleared to one metre only depending on availability of time available.

### Community Transport

I genuinely extend my gratitude to John Coleman who has continued to be the Town Council's representative for transport. The fact that he attends meetings on behalf of the Town Council and gives a very knowledgeable report to the Environment Committee on the ever changing rail system and the ever diminishing bus services is a huge and invaluable help.

His full reports can be read on the Town Council website.

### North Weald Community Transport Partnership Ltd - WealdLink Bus Service

The Town Council is a major contributor to the funding of Wealdlink Bus Service.

I attended the last Wealdlink meeting and the message coming across was that funding cuts from ESCC were a major concern and Wealdlink have had to put in a tender for the 226 route and other supported services which have now been combined into one contract. The 226 will be funded for only two days a week, this is deemed unacceptable by users.

Wealdlink are always looking at how they can

offer new services to the community in a bid to keep funds coming in. They have a very informative website.

### Environment Warden

Crowborough has an ever growing litter problem and Julie Blunden does a great job against all the odds. Neighbourhood watch groups may be able to help with controlling litter problems and the Town Council has approached Wealden District Council as the litter authority to run a campaign to raise awareness.

The new dog fouling law is in place and anybody caught not clearing up after their dog can be fined.

### Police

We have regular meetings with the police (Sgt Michael Keeler).

Our four CCTV cameras that are placed around Crowborough are coming up for review and Sgt Keeler has requested that they are retained as they have proved a very useful resource in conjunction with the monitoring service now based at Lewes. Crowborough is deemed to be a low crime area.

Police reorganisation means that sadly for Crowborough PC Richard Walters has been moved to the crime detection unit based at Uckfield. Sgt Michael Keeler is covering a larger area and his duties include supervising the PCSOs in the area.

### PCSO

PCSO Chris Harrison reported in September that Speed Watch schemes have been set up and warning letters have been sent to 41 offenders since mid-July. Crowborough has two Speed Watch cameras for use by residents. He also reported that policing priorities include parking, road safety, traffic issues and anti-social behaviour in the Ghyll. The PCSOs hold regular street meetings and Chris Harrison has held surgeries at the Town Hall on specified Thursdays.

*Environment continued...*

### Street Lighting

We continue to maintain the Town's street lights.

The Country Park, The Ghyll, Palesgate Lane and Bluebell Wood Work and maintenance has continued as per the five year management plan. The plan expires this year and a new one is being drawn up.

Controlling invasive species, management of grassland, replacing of fencing and gates and tree management are just a few of the tasks that the ground staff have to tackle.



I thank Barry Kemp for advising us on the introduction of Exmoor ponies to the part of Palesgate Lane site that is both difficult and costly to maintain. We hope to have them back next year.

- Chairman Cllr Sandra Timms

### Finance and General Purposes Report

It seems rather weird writing an annual report after only 9 months of the year but in this multiple Election year (National, District and Town) it is necessary to hold an early Town Conference.

As you will be all too aware that the Town Council element of the council tax was not increased at all for 2014/15, remaining at £128.37 for a Band D property and I am confident that we will have completed our programme within those "balanced budget" constraints, but only just.

Regarding 2015/16 the Finance & General

Purposes Committee met and agreed the draft budget and proposed a small increase in council tax and it was the intention to review these budgets and set the precept at the Full Council Meeting on 13th January. Subsequent events have caused a delay and we have deferred any decision until the final deadline day, namely 5th February.

The reason for the delay, and what is really the big story in 2015 and beyond, is the resolution passed by Council to consider the opportunity of acquiring the freehold of Pine Grove, the ex Wealden District Council offices, for the benefit of providing local employment and business opportunities to the Crowborough Community.

This feasibility study is in the middle of preparation and will be discussed by the full council, as mentioned on 5th February, so today it is not an approved council policy but if it becomes so you should know that it will result in an increased precept which will result in a substantial increase in your council tax. You will of course have your say because you will want your voice heard.

So by the time you read this report you will know more than I do right now about what the future for Crowborough holds. I have strong personal views but this is not the right place to air them.

Onto other matters.

We continued to assess and award grants totalling £50,000. Apart from the two main regular recipients, the Citizens Advice Bureau and Clued-Up, other grants were awarded to the 1st Crowborough Scouts, the Jarvis Brook Community Hub project, Age Concern Crowborough & Rotherfield 55+.

Crowborough Bonfire & Carnival Society, Home Start, the Crowborough Players and Crowborough Arts. We also awarded a grant to The Society of the Friends of Montargis and just recently to the British Legion to install railings at the Canadian War Memorial grave on Crowborough Beacon golf course.

*Finance & General Purposes continued..*

We have transferred old Council records going back many decades (circa 1905) to the new County Council archive facility, The Keep, at Falmer where they, and many others, are available for viewing.

We have reviewed our Financial Regulations,

our Standing Orders and discussed the way you may film and record meetings, should you ever feel the need.

We have passed our internal and external audits without comment.

- Chairman Cllr Quentin Burch

### Communications and Events Report

In addition to our annual events the committee is responsible for many other events and receptions that take place throughout the year. 2014 was another exciting year for the Events and Communications Committee.

The council, in conjunction with the Crowborough branch of the British Legion, commemorated Armed Forces Week by holding a flag flying ceremony on the 28th June at Montargis Terrace. Local cadet groups provided a colour guard of six cadets and it was a fitting way to pay tribute to those who serve in our armed forces.

Crowborough Town Council was pleased to be invited along with two other councils to showcase its work at the South of England Show. The council attended as part of the 'Parishes of the Councils of East Sussex' stand and representatives were able to talk to visitors about projects instigated by the Town council.



Representatives from Crowborough Town Council at the South of England Show.

In August, Crowborough welcomed visitors from our twinned town of Montargis. The town has a vibrant twinning group 'The Society of the Friends of Montargis' and a civic reception is held in the Town Hall once a year to formally

welcome our guests and Crowborough host families. The reception is an informal event and it is lovely to see the Town Hall packed with Crowborough residents welcoming their friends from France.



The Mayor of Crowborough, Ron Reed, with Hilary Lyon, Chairman of 'The Society of the Friends of Montargis' and Alain Simon of 'Les Amis de Crowborough'.

We were also delighted to welcome Richard Silvester, Mayor of Horwich, to the Town's Civic Carol Service which was held in All Saints Church in December. Crowborough and Horwich celebrate their 25th anniversary of twinning this year. To commemorate the occasion Horwich Cycling Club will cycle the 300 miles from Horwich to Crowborough. Arrangements are being made for sporting fixtures to take place in the commemorative year as well as the resigning of the twinning charter.

Another of the committee's responsibilities is the Christmas lights for the Town. This year's lights were spectacular as was acknowledged by the calls and emails from residents who contacted us to say how much they enhanced the town at Christmas time. The Christmas tree on the piazza suffered less vandalism

*Communications & Events continued...*

than in recent years and the lack of high winds over the period meant that there were no problems with the Christmas lights that straddle Crowborough High Street.

Our Christmas lights play a large part in the Town's Christmas event and this year



was no exception. Thousands attended the event which culminated in the Christmas lights being switched on

by Holby City's Mark Moraghan and CBeebies Gemma Davies.

The council is committed to raising the profile of Crowborough through its events and the annual Summer Fair, Fireworks Display and Christmas Event have gone from strength to strength with record numbers attending.

#### Events Calendar 2015

The Boundary Walk – 10th May

Sussex Day – 16th June

Flag Flying Ceremony – 27th June

Summer Fair – 11th July

Fireworks Display – 5th November

Civic Carol Service – 1st December

Christmas Event – 27th December

- Chairman Cllr Matthew Street

### Planning and Development Report

Although Crowborough's location adjacent to the Ashdown Forest means that the Core Strategy Local Plan restricts development within the town, there have been a few more contentious applications submitted and determined in the past year.

Planning applications that might increase vehicle traffic and, hence, nitrogen deposition on the forest are routinely refused planning permission. This means that the range of application types is very limited – most applications are now for household extensions

*Planning & Development continued...*

and minor changes of use, which do not affect nitrogen deposition.

The Core Strategy requires Wealden District Council to provide 300 homes within the town. They have been seeking to allocate land for those homes, so the Town Council has sought to influence where these are located through the Strategic Sites Local Plan. The Town Council objected to some of the sites put forward, in particular that at Walshes Road, and sought to influence how development may take place elsewhere.

Despite the objections of the Town Council, local residents and other local groups and representatives, Wealden District Council determined to approve an allocation for 140 houses at Walshes Road. This Committee has consistently raised concerns about the impacts of this development on the community.

Another application for substantial residential development was made at Steel Cross as an alternative to the other allocations for development in the town centre. The Town Council decided to object to that application and it was refused by the District Council and is currently at appeal.

The Committee continues to meet every three weeks and considers a number of applications at every meeting.

We also try to pick up on relevant consultations both from national and local government. We will continue to seek to influence the location of houses through the examination into the Strategic Sites Local Plan during 2014.

The Town Council is currently in the early stages of preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, which would guide development within the town. A Steering Committee has been set up involving people from various organisations around the town, along with a number of working parties looking at different aspects of development, such as housing, transportation, commercial development, the environment (built and natural), community facilities and infrastructure.

Although these groups have been set

*Planning & Development continued...*

up and started work, they are not closed groups. If people are interested in getting involved with this, they should email NP@crowborougrowthcouncil.gov.uk or view the Town Council website for more information. Any assistance with preparation of this very important document will be welcomed.

Finally, thank you to all the members of this Committee. It is a time consuming process going through all the applications and other documentation every three weeks, taking up a lot of councillor's weekends prior to our Monday evening meetings.

- Chairman Cllr Matthew Street

### Sport, Recreation and Cemetery Report

The Sport Recreation and Cemetery Committee has been busy over the last year, moving new projects forward, working with various groups in the town and updating or refurbishing areas within the town.

#### Allotments

We have worked with the Pilmer Road Allotment Tending Society (PRATS) to obtain planning permission for new poly tunnels and an agreement has been reached for their use by the allotment holders. We are currently applying for a certificate of lawful use and development to install a structure to include a toilet, shelter and storage space.

A wild flower meadow has been planted at Owlsbury on land currently not used for allotments. We had discussions about a community orchard, but have decided in the first instance to plant two fruit trees by the meadow and apiary.

#### Goldsmiths Recreation Ground

We have worked with the local youth to update the skate park. The skaters came to the Town Council with their ideas and, together with Wheelscape, a new design was agreed. The work on this project was delayed slightly due to the wet spring but the new park was opened in December. The council is hoping to work with the skaters again in the coming year with a view to installing both solar lighting and paths to the skate park from the main path.



After discussions with the Youth

Council, a shelter was chosen and installed behind the skate park.

A replacement swing set and netting has been installed in the play area.

A major project has been undertaken at the changing rooms. We have updated the hot and cold water systems, installed new boilers and larger gas and water mains and have generally improved the shower and toilet facilities. The council is grateful to Sport England for its grant towards this project.

A lease has been signed with the Locomotive Society which has enabled them to start the extension to their track on the land adjacent to Goldsmiths. We have now put up a fence and planted a hedge around this area of land.

Repairs have been carried out to the floodlighting at the Petanque court.

Crowborough Runners came to a recent council meeting to talk about their aspirations for the running track. Discussions are at an early stage as to how these aspirations could become a reality.

#### Wolfe Recreation Ground



New play equipment has been installed for younger children along with a roundabout that is designed to be accessible to wheelchairs.

*Sports, Recreation and Cemetery continued...*

A "kicking wall" has also been installed.

#### **Canada Green**

Following the sale of a property at The Glebelands, land belonging to the Town Council has reverted back to us. We are consulting with the Royal British Legion regarding the planting of trees and provision of benches as a dedication to Sussex soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought in WW1.

#### **Palesgate Lane**

The committee has worked with The Jarvis Brook Sports Club to obtain a certificate of lawful use for land next to the Limekiln playing fields. A working party has been set up to look

at the sporting opportunities for the land.

#### **Herne Cemetery**

A replacement fence has been installed at Herne Cemetery.

#### **Summersales**

Planning permission has been granted for the new burial ground at Summersales. The speed limit (a condition of the planning permission) has been moved. An archaeological survey was carried out (another condition) and options discussed for the new car park and access track.

- *Chairman Cllr Kay Moss*

## **CROWBOROUGH ANNUAL TOWN CONFERENCE**

**All Saints New Church Centre. Chapel Green. Crowborough.**

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**7.30pm**

***Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and Chris Kempshall W.W.1. Project Manager for East Sussex County Council will be addressing the conference.***

***Please join the Mayor and Councillors for coffee from 6.45pm.***



### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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