

# Chair & Vice-Chair's Bulletin



**Issue No 6  
October to December 2023**

**We are delighted and proud to have attended the following events:**

## October

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
University of Sussex

Nichola Watters, WDC's Head of Planning Policy, Economy & Climate Change, and I had the pleasure of attending a presentation arranged by Professors Reffin, Marshall and Quadrianto from the Department of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Sussex. It was a fascinating presentation which gave us a greater understanding of a collaborative mapping project, drawing together the work of the living laboratories at Wakehurst Place and Natural England and run by the University of Sussex. The staff were incredibly generous with their time and we both left feeling enriched by the experience and excited about the project.



**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
Isfield Angling Club



The Isfield and District Angling Club is one of the many good causes signed up to the Wealden Community Lottery platform to help raise funds for their club. It was great to meet Nigel Greenwood, one of the club trustees and Marc Stevens, the Bailiff for Firtoll, to hear more about what they do for the community and to hear their future plans. Isfield and District Angling Club provides angling opportunities across the whole Wealden area on a range of lakes and rivers suitable for anglers of all ages and abilities. They are raising funds to turn an ecologically degraded pond in the heart of the Wealden District into a vibrant and diverse fishery bringing new angling amenity, diverse habitat and environmental enhancement.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>**  
Community Leaders' Lunch, Uckfield Rectory

It was a real treat to be invited to Rev. John Wall's Community Leader's Lunch at his home in Uckfield. Not only is Rev. John the Rector of Uckfield Plurality (which includes Uckfield, Isfield and Horsted Parva), but he is a fantastic cook. It was wonderful to catch up with many familiar faces from the Uckfield area and hear about their very active roles in the community.



**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>**  
Visit to Maynards Green Primary School



I had the pleasure of speaking to the whole school at Maynard's Green, which is over 200 children. I was blown away by how well behaved, engaged and enthusiastic they were. The children asked lots of questions and contributed actively to the discussion. We talked about linear versus circular economies and the importance of nature based solutions.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>**

Visit to Hankham Primary School

It was my greatest pleasure to be able to engage with such enthusiastic and curious children at Hankham Primary School. They made me so welcome and gave me the opportunity to speak about nature-based solutions and the importance of taking part in our democracy.



**Monday 9<sup>th</sup>**

Visit to Ninfield Primary School

After having a tour of the school by the headmaster, Mr Daniel Getty, I joined the Monday afternoon assembly. I spoke to the school about the difference between a linear and a circular economy and the children particularly seemed to enjoy the interactive parts, acting out the process of recycling. As ever, lots of wonderful questions from lively young minds.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>**

Cart Barn Housing Development

The Housing Team at Wealden District Council have worked incredibly hard to bring about the new development of homes at Cart Barn Place, in Heathfield. It was great to see the final result. The development is available to applicants on Wealden's Housing Register; it will provide much needed affordable family homes and single occupancy flats. Congratulations to all the team for making this happen.





### **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>**

#### Visit to Park Mead Primary School

Visiting Park Mead was a joyful experience. I was given a warm welcome by the Head, Heidi West and I had the honour of speaking in a whole school assembly about the importance of nature-based solutions and taking part in local democracy. I was delighted to have such a lively and interactive audience. One five year old boy said to me "We have to help the planet win!" Wise words indeed.

### **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>**

#### Visit to St John's Primary School

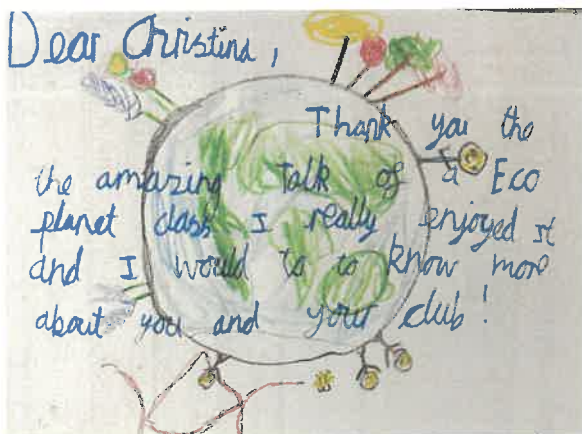
I was so impressed with the children and staff at St John's Primary School in Crowborough this morning. So many brilliant questions all about local government, democracy, how the children can engage to shape a better future, and environmental concerns. I was lucky enough to talk with the year 6 class, who were brimming with bright ideas, before taking a whole school assembly. Thank you, St John's for making me so welcome.



### **(Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> and) Friday 20<sup>th</sup>**

#### Visit to Polegate Primary School

I went to visit Polegate Primary school on the Friday afternoon just before they were about to break up for half term and there was certainly a buzz of excitement in the air. Nevertheless, the 400 children who attended my talk were beautifully behaved and contributed enthusiastically to the discussions. After the talk, I had the pleasure of meeting with "Polegate Parliament" - the school representatives who had been elected by their classmates - to hear about the issues that mattered most to them. I am so impressed with young people who are prepared to stand up and call for change; it takes real determination, intelligence and courage. The headmistress, Deborah Jones, should be congratulated for making this possible.



## **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup>**

### Imago Community – East Sussex Young Carers

This is my second day out with the Imago Team and the Wealden group of young carers. We went to the rock climbing centre at Bowles near Tunbridge Wells where we all donned our harnesses and hard hats before scrambling up various rock faces. I was so impressed with both the children and the volunteer staff who fostered an incredible sense of team spirit, ensuring that the children supported one another to overcome their fears and challenges.



## **Monday 30<sup>th</sup>**

### Visit by HRH The Duke of Gloucester



As His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester was visiting Wealden this week, it was my privilege to welcome him, along with the Vice Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Graham Peters DL, and the Reverend Peter Blee. We enjoyed a convivial afternoon and it was a wonderful opportunity for me to visit the unique and beautiful Berwick Church, which really is a hidden treasure. The Church was decorated in bold colour by the Bloomsbury artists, Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and Quentin Bell. While it was highly controversial at the time, it is now a tranquil space that offers fantastic community outreach to a great number of local charities. Numerous groups such as blind veterans, young carers and people suffering with social isolation are looked after by the passionate and enthusiastic outreach officer, Catherine Marsh Lewis.

## November

### **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>**

#### Visit to Mark Cross Primary School

I was so impressed with the children at Mark Cross school. They were incredibly well informed, curious and engaging. I was utterly charmed by them and thoroughly enjoyed my visit to the school. It was wonderful to hear a boy from year one talking about the role of fungus on decaying trees. There was also a lively discussion about bee keeping. I learned something new from a pupil in year six; that acacia trees communicate with each other by releasing a pulse of ethylene gas, to warn other trees that there is a predator about. They really made my day!



### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday

On Saturday morning, I was honoured to attend the Armistice Day service at the Church of the Holy Cross, Uckfield. On Sunday morning, I walked in the parade, laid the wreath on behalf of Wealden District Council and attended the Remembrance Day service at All Saints Church in Crowborough. On Sunday afternoon, it was a great privilege to also take part in the parade, lay the wreath and attend the Remembrance Day service in Uckfield. They were all incredibly moving events, attended by people who had recently lost loved ones to war and by 90-year-old veterans. It was particularly poignant at this time when we are all too aware of the consequences of conflict.



Dear Christina,

We enjoyed your talk about the Environment. It helped us a lot and it was very informative. We had lots of fun acting out how things get recycled. Every one

loves the environment now and is very caring about stopping climate change. We will

take on your advice to the future. You have inspired us to save the Environment. You are a very kind and amazing and inspiring woman and you have told our class to respect nature and the world around us. We have learnt so much and really respect your work as a the chair at Welden Councils.

Everyone in our class admires you. You inspired us a lot today. Thank you for coming

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>**

Visit to Rotherfield Primary School

What a joy it was to spend the morning at Rotherfield Primary School. I was lucky enough to sit in on their school assembly, hearing about their commitment to 'Eco-Schools' and their determination to reduce their carbon footprint. I presented my interactive talk on the climate and biodiversity crisis. The children were fantastic participants, with an impressive understanding of the urgency of the situation and the possible solutions. I was really touched to get such positive feedback from them.

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>**

Visit to Frant Primary School

It was a great pleasure to meet the children of Frant Primary School. They took part in the presentation, exploring how a circular economy works, through an activity involving the distribution of fabrics. They had a strong grasp of the concept by the end of the presentation. We also discussed the structures of local and national government and the importance of taking part in democracy. There were definitely some budding future politicians in the room, which was a delight to see.





## **Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>**

### Visit to Ashdown Primary School

It was a double visit on the 28<sup>th</sup>, first to meet the Ashdown Primary School Infant's site, where I had the pleasure of the company of the Green Team, before giving a whole school assembly. I then went to Ashdown Primary's Junior site, to give a second assembly and have a separate meeting with the Junior Green team there. It was very moving to hear how one young pupil enjoyed gardening and litter picking as it made him feel closer to his much-loved grandad, who passed away last year. It was so inspiring to hear of the healing power of nature from the perspective of a child.

## December

### **Friday 1<sup>st</sup>**

#### Brighter Uckfield

Huge Congratulations to all the team at Brighter Uckfield who were the deserving winners of the King's Award for Voluntary Service this year. When I went to congratulate them during the Uckfield late night Christmas shopping event, they were busy putting out all the rubbish bags and were set to return early the next morning for the clean-up. They are also responsible for many of the town's floral displays and decorations. They really are unsung heroes, making the whole experience of Uckfield high street town centre a more joyous one. I am so pleased that they have been recognised with this award.



**The King's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

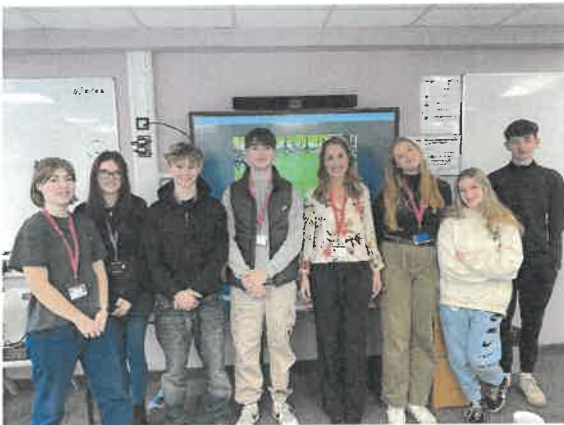




## Friday 1<sup>st</sup>

### Uckfield Christmas Tree Festival

I couldn't resist the invitation of mulled wine and the display of 105 uniquely decorated Christmas trees filling the Holy Cross Church in Uckfield. The wonderful festive exhibition is thanks to all the various local schools, businesses, organisations and individuals and is a radiant expression of the community. What a great way to get you into the Christmas spirit.



## Monday 11<sup>th</sup>

### Visit to Uckfield College

I was invited to Uckfield College to speak to the A-Level politics class about engagement in politics and green issues. They were a fantastic group of thoughtful students and I loved the interesting discussions that we had. Thank you for making me so welcome. I look forward to returning soon!!

## Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>

### One Voice Festival of Singing

It was so magical to hear the children's voices fill Glyndebourne last night with festive cheer such as "Walking in the Air." Many Sussex schools were represented at Create Music's 'One Voice' including Wealden's Crowborough St John's. What a wonderful opportunity for more than 200 primary school children and, of course, for their very proud families. Thank you to Peter Chivers, the Director of 'One Voice'.





**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**Isfield Church**

Thank you, Rev Martha Mutikani, for your incredible work; not only are you a loving and inspirational faith leader, but you work tirelessly for the NHS. We are so lucky to have you in our community. Thank you for inviting me to read one of the nine lessons this Christmas.

*May we wish you and yours a merry Christmas and a happy,  
healthy and prosperous new year.*