



Civic News



The official newsletter of East Grinstead Town Council

Cycle routes review “urgent”

THE Town Council has called for a review of East Grinstead cycle routes to be made a priority by West Sussex County Council in a bid to cut traffic congestion and reduce pollution.

WSCC published its Cycle Strategy two years ago and since then has worked on schemes to encourage people out of their cars and on to bikes in Crawley, Chichester and Worthing.

“Modest” improvements in East Grinstead have included the provision of additional cycle racks in the town centre, some dedicated cycle lane markings along parts of London Road and discussions with local schools about travel plans for pupils. But following talks with local resident and keen cyclist David Gadbury, the Town Council now believes that further progress should be made ahead of West Sussex’s current schedule which would mean waiting until after 2010. “The number of cyclists in East Grinstead is depressingly small,” said David, “and despite encouraging words from central and local government, few people in the town use this environmentally friendly and cheap means of getting about because it’s simply too dangerous.

“What is needed is a network of designated cycle routes and cycle lanes to enable easier and safer access for cyclists to the town centre and to key points like the station.” David suggests this could be done “easily and cheaply” by using the town’s parks, improving the Worth and Forest Ways, using non-highways like Chapmans Lane, Hackenden Lane and Sandy Lane, and turning underused pavements such as those along the Lewes Road into combined pedestrian/cycle paths. He would also like to see St Margaret’s Loop, which extends from the town station to the Queen Victoria hospital, cleared. “Owing to its geography East Grinstead will never reach the level of cycle usage in many European countries but we could and should do a lot more.” he said.

Cllr Heidi Brunsdon, chairman of the East Grinstead Sustainability and Environment working group, agreed. “Cycling not only offers a great way to avoid and reduce traffic congestion, but it is healthy, convenient, environmentally responsible and sustainable.”

It’s Silver for East Grinstead



EAST Grinstead was presented with a Silver by Blue Peter gardener Chris Collins at the South East in Bloom awards ceremony in September.

The summer saw a doubling of the number of businesses sponsoring hanging baskets, bringing this year’s total to more than 100 for the first time.

David Banks, Chairman of East Grinstead in Bloom, praised the partnership-working between the Council, commercial interests and the public which had earned such a good result in the annual competition.

“We’ve had a record number of hanging baskets in the town centre and new displays at the station and on roundabouts, so as far as flowers go East Grinstead has never looked better,” he said.

Amenities Officer Keith Astley agreed. “I’d particularly like to thank the Council’s outdoor staff for all the efforts they put in during a very difficult summer to make the town environment so attractive,” he said.

For comprehensive information about Metrobus routes, timetables and transport links ring 01293 449191 or see the website at www.metrobus.co.uk

Council seeks new Plan

COUNCIL Leader James Baldwin has welcomed an offer by Mid Sussex District Council to prepare a local alternative to the proposed Core Strategy for East Grinstead. The offer comes in the wake of town councillors' dismay at changes to the existing Plan which have been approved by the Secretary of State Hazel Blears: these include increasing the number of new houses to be built within the Mid Sussex district without any direct commitment to the necessary traffic relief.

In response, the Town Council is now working with colleagues at MSDC and West Sussex County Council as members of the Three Tiers Group to find a new plan for East Grinstead.

James said: "This Core Strategy should not be about what Mrs Blears wants, or what Mid Sussex wants, but what East Grinstead wants and needs.

"The Council is committed to listening to the views of local people on the future of the town, to incorporating those views in its own Plan, and to carry on fighting for that Plan.

"This means common sense on housing numbers, action on traffic relief and a strategy to develop more local jobs and regenerate the town centre."

* Copies of minutes from all the Three Tiers Group meetings can be found on the Town Council website at www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk under 'meetings' and 'other'.

Fancy that!

CHEQUER Mead is to host a new Costume Store and Fancy Dress Hire under veteran thespians Sandie Goman and Barbara Stovold,

The pair have been involved in making costumes for local productions for more than 20 years, but their collection had reached bursting point.

"We either had to find a proper home for everything or get rid of it altogether," said Barbara. So when the cabin at Chequer Mead theatre became vacant, the pair applied to move in and to use the area under the stage for storage.

"We now have around 1500 costumes including many given by the East Grinstead Operatic Society, ACE and the Copthorne Players, and we've spent the last nine months cleaning, repairing and cataloguing them."

Among the collection are some "really beautiful" Tudor costumes - and a dragon.

The store will open for fancy dress hire on Saturday mornings between 10am and 1pm, from 18 October, with prices between £5 and £20.

Productions can be fitted out by appointment.

"This is something the town and the theatre needs," said Barbara, "and we are very grateful for the support we have had, particularly from the mayor, Ginnie Waddingham."

*** To find out more contact Barbara on 01342 322944.**



Peter Pan Panto

THE Company of Friends will bring Peter Pan to Chequer Mead this Christmas in their ninth and most ambitious pantomime to date. Justin Thomas-Verweij will be playing the boy who never grew up, with Lily de la Haye Earl as his leading lady Wendy.

But before they embark on a gruelling 17 performances between 20 and 30 December Justin and Lily will have to take 'flying' lessons

to prepare them for their trip to Neverland.

To book contact the box office on 01342 302000.

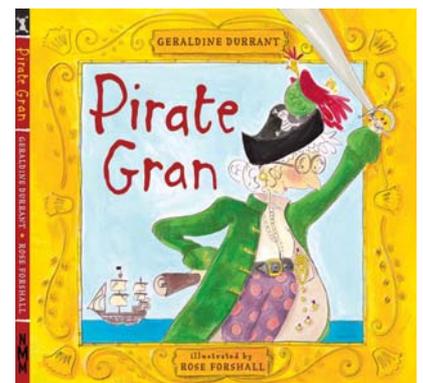
From PR to Pirates

TOWN Council communications officer Geraldine Durrant will see her first book in print in time for Christmas.

Geraldine was commissioned to write *Pirate Gran* by the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich after she won a BBC competition to promote reading and writing.

"It's a change to go from PR to pirates," she said, "but I am thrilled with the result - artist Rose Forshall has turned it into a really beautiful book."

*** *Pirate Gran* is available for order on Amazon now.**



High Weald's Woodland



IN the fourth of our series we look at the story of the High Weald's Woodland.

Seventy per cent of the woodland in your parish is probably 'ancient'! Trees and woodland cover over one third of this distinctive landscape - with its pattern of steep, wooded ravines (called gills), small woods and copses separating the fields. The woods of the High Weald were relatively slow to be cleared because they were a valued human resource, yielding wood for

timber and fuel plus acorns and beech mast for animal food (particularly pigs). Although heavily exploited, High Weald woods were rarely destroyed. While the surrounding lands (and indeed much of England) were being permanently settled and farmed, the High Weald remained relatively uncultivated: by Domesday (1086) it was the most densely wooded area remaining in England. Even when agricultural clearance did begin in the High Weald, much of the woodland was retained. Field boundaries were formed by leaving strips of the original woodland between the fields. The many woods on steep-sided gills would not have yielded useful agricultural land anyway. The remaining woodland continued to provide valuable resources, particularly for the iron industry. Much of today's High Weald woodland has probably never been cleared. Today, over 70% of the High Weald's woodland is classed as ancient - having existed continuously since at least 1600AD. (Nationally, only about 19% of woodland is ancient.)

Having existed for hundreds of years, ancient woodlands are very important habitats for certain woodland plants that can only colonise very slowly. Ancient woodlands also contain a wealth of archaeological features - for example the remains of iron workings.

High Weald woodlands were managed for centuries by skilled workers, using a rotational coppice system. This ensured that a renewable supply of wood was always available - especially for fuel and building materials.

Woodlands need to be worked: without management, they become derelict and wildlife species that depend upon working woodland as a habitat suffer. Coppice woodland, in particular, is an important habitat because many British flowering plants, mammals and insects thrive under this rotational system - often the rarer species are now only found in working coppice.

To find out more, please visit www.highweald.org

Ashplats Wood - the jewel in the crown

IS your gym closing down? Why not join the free green gym in Ashplats Wood? Ashplats Wood is part of the East Court Estate which is considered to be East Grinstead's 'Jewel in the Crown'.

Ashplats Conservation Group would like you to join them to generally maintain and conserve the wood. Formed in March 1998 the Group undertakes tasks such as removing invasive non-native Rhododendron, maintaining a wild meadow, which we plan to enhance by over seeding with native wild flowers, clearing ponds, streams and footpaths, cutting back overhanging trees etc. We operate with guidance from a WSCC Countryside Ranger and support from Mid Sussex DC, the East Grinstead War Memorial committee and East Grinstead Town Council.

With the pressure of house building in and around East Grinstead reaching an all time high it is important to maintain our green spaces for the use and enjoyment of the people of East Grinstead.

Contact: Mike Mangan 01342 321316.

News in Brief

Rachel in the Dragon's Den



COUNCIL Leader James Baldwin congratulated East Grinstead entrepreneur Rachel Watkyn for getting an investment of £60,000 on the TV hit show *Dragon's Den*. Rachel persuaded Dragons Peter Jones and Theo Paphitis to invest in her Coombe Hill Road based *Tiny Box Company* which makes containers from recycled materials.

United they stand

THE town's business community is to unite under the single banner of the East Grinstead Business Association. The EGBA under Chris Parker will represent the town's industrial parks, retailers and other businesses to give traders "a single coherent voice" in the future development of East Grinstead.

Old Road, new print

TOWN Mayor Ginnie Waddingham attended the launch of a new limited edition print featuring East Grinstead's historic *Old Road*. The mounted but unframed print is available from the museum, or the High Street Gallery, for £39.95.



Take a hike to Hartfield

A TRAIL in the paw prints of Winnie the Pooh has been named as one of the UK's "Top 50 walks" in the Sunday Times.

Pooh Country maps to walks on Ashdown Forest are available from town tourism officer Simon Kerr who said: "I am not at all surprised to see us listed so highly - East Grinstead and its environs have a great deal to offer visitors."

DIARY OF FUTURE COUNCIL MEETINGS 2008

06 Oct	(M)	Council
07 Oct	(T)	Planning
20 Oct	(M)	Planning
03 Nov	(M)	Planning
06 Nov	(Th)	Public Services
13 Nov	(Th)	Amenities & Tourism
17 Nov	(M)	Planning
20 Nov	(Th)	Finance & General Purposes
01 Dec	(M)	Council
02 Dec	(T)	Planning
11 Dec	(Th)	Charities
15 Dec	(M)	Planning

2009

08 Jan	(Th)	Public Services Committee
12 Jan	(M)	Planning
15 Jan	(Th)	Amenities & Tourism
22 Jan	(Th)	Finance & General Purposes
26 Jan	(M)	Planning
02 Feb	(M)	Council (Precept)
09 Feb	(M)	Planning
23 Feb	(M)	Planning
09 March	(M)	Planning
12 March	(Th)	Public Services
19 March	(Th)	Amenities & Tourism

Notes: All meetings are held in the Council Chamber, East Court Mansion, at 7.45 p.m. and are open to the public and press. All full Council meetings include a maximum of 30 minutes set aside at the beginning for public question time. All committee meetings begin with a maximum of 15 minutes for public questions.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

East Grinstead Town Council, East Court	01342 323636
West Sussex County Council Area Highways	01243 642105
East Grinstead Learning Centre	01342 321874
Citizens' Advice Bureau, Cantelupe Road	01342 321638
Library, West Street	01342 410050
Help Point at the Library	01342 300780
Queen Victoria Hospital, Holtye Road	01342 414000
New Downland Housing Association	01444 414429
Kings Leisure Centre, Moat Road	01342 328616
Police Station, East Court	0845 6070999
Mid Sussex District Council	01444 458166
East Grinstead Visitor Information	01342 410121
Samaritans	0845 7909090
Chequer Mead	01342 302000
Museum	01342 302233

HELP!

Services provided by West Sussex County Council, Mid Sussex District Council or East Grinstead Town Council can all be accessed from the Help Point in East Grinstead Library. So if you have a query, or if you are not sure whom to contact, then please drop into the Help Point during opening hours:

Monday to Friday	9.30 - 5.30
Saturday	9.30 - 12.30

Telephone enquiries are welcome on
01342 300780 or by fax on 01342 410262
e mail: east.grinstead.help.point@westsussex.gov.uk



IT'S YOUR COUNCIL.

TELL COUNCILLORS WHAT YOU THINK!

Contact any of the Town Councillors shown in the listing with your views on the items in this edition of *Civic News* or on local issues bothering you, or write to the Council at
East Court Mansion, College Lane, East Grinstead, RH19 3LT.
For up-to-date information and news about the Town Council visit our website at www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk
e mail: towncouncil@eastgrinstead.gov.uk

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLOR

Herontye

Stephen Barnett 10 Woods Hill Close 326001
[LD] A&T, F&GP Ashurst Wood RH19 3RJ

Ian Dixon Chevalhurst, Dunning's Road 317213
[LD] PS, A&T East Grinstead RH19 4AD

Rob Musk Scandia, Hurst Farm Road 313310
[LD] Pl, A&T*, F&GP East Grinstead, RH19 4BL

Town

James Baldwin Scarletts, Sandy Lane 321347
[LD] PS, A&T, F&GP* East Grinstead RH19 3LP

Jim Joyce-Nelson 1 Dexter Drive 314727
[LD] Pl, PS, F&GP East Grinstead RH19 4SU

Virginia Waddingham 11 Beckett Way 326627
[LD] Pl, PS, A&T, F&GP East Grinstead RH19 4SF

Worsted

Margaret Collins, DL Bodinnick, Lewes Road 324296
[LD] PS, F&GP East Grinstead RH19 3UD

Baldwins

Bernard Gillbard 7 Meadowcroft Close 325184
[LD] PS#, F&GP East Grinstead RH19 1NA

Christine Mainstone Mallaig, Windmill Lane 326454
[LD] Pl, A&T# East Grinstead RH19 2DY

Lee Marmara Mill House, The Feld, 301265
[LD] Pl, PS, A&T, F&GP London Rd, East Grinstead RH19 2QL

Ashplats

Liz Bennett 39 Copse Close 301007
[C] PS, A&T East Grinstead, RH19 3EF

Paul Johnson Kingsmere Cottage 311359
[LD] Pl*, PS, F&GP Stoneleigh Close East Grinstead RH19 3DY

Lee Quinn 6 Dallaway Gardens 317817
[C] Pl, PS East Grinstead, RH19 1AZ

Peter Reed 38 Fulmar Drive 311926
[C] Pl, F&GP East Grinstead, RH19 3NN

Imberhorne

David Banks 29 St Johns Road 312258
[LD] Pl, A&T East Grinstead RH19 3LG

Heidi Brunson 83 Blount Avenue 327200
[LD] Pl, F&GP# East Grinstead, RH19 1JN

Bob Mainstone Mallaig, Windmill Lane 326454
[LD] PS *, A&T, F&GP East Grinstead RH19 2DY

Barry Starmer Kimberley, Pine Grove 300534
[LD] Pl #, A&T East Grinstead RH19 2BB

Indication of Committee: Pl - Planning, PS - Public Services, A&T - Amenities & Tourism, F&GP - Finance & General Purposes *Chairman, # Vice Chairman.

All phone numbers are 01342 and are Councillors' private numbers.
C - Conservative LD - Liberal Democrat

SAVINGS LEAD TO SMALL LOANS

THE local community savings and loans cooperative - the East Grinstead and District Credit Union (EGDCU) - is growing fast and is able to help individuals with small loans up to £3000 after an initial, regular saving period. In these "credit crunch" days, such loans can make all the difference with paying unexpected household bills, holidays, college fees, school uniform etc. EGDCU is run by its members for its members and loans are repayable at favourable interest rates. **Further information from our regular collection point at St Swithun's Church hall on Saturdays from 10-12am, or ring Patrick Kiley EG 312173 or Susan Joy EG 315440.** Recent grants from West Sussex CC and the Donibee Charitable Trust is enabling EGDCU to work with local schools to encourage children to save regularly and hopefully avoid debt problems in the future.