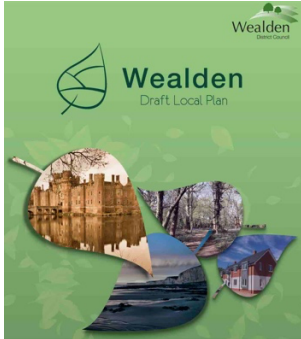


Wealden District Councillor, Graham Shaw

Update and News

December 2025

THE LOCAL PLAN (AGAIN!)



18 months after the consultation on the first draft of the Plan closed, we are approaching the start of the second consultation. This will be about the parts that have had to be revised because of comments made in the first consultation or because of the changes to governments requirements made last December.

The government has given us a higher housing target (1457 homes a year in place of 1200) and changed the way in which we're allowed to deal with transport issues such as congestion.

These changes do not of course produce any more land that can be built on sustainably; it does mean that sites previously rejected as unsuitable are having to be reassessed and that planning inspectors are more likely to reject traffic issues as a valid reason for refusal.

The amount of work that has to be done to produce the Plan is enormous, but our intention is to present the revised Plan to the full Council for approval at the end of January and then (if it's approved) to have a 6-week consultation shortly afterwards.

Even though Wealden will disappear in a few years getting a local plan over the line remains important as it will likely govern future development whilst the new local authority gets to grip with planning and development.

CROWBOROUGH CAMP



Unfortunately, some of our local politicians still seem intent on using the anger around the use of Crowborough Camp to house asylum seekers, to blame the Liberal Democrat-Green-Labour administration at the district council, even though the decision rests with the Home Office and Government Ministers.

The District Council unanimously passed a motion opposing the use of the Camp for asylum seekers. Officers and councillors are working hard on seeking this outcome, meeting regularly with Home Office ministers and civil servants, despite our limited powers. We have issued a Planning Contravention Notice on the Home Office and continue to seek further legal advice. We are also working closely with the County Council, Police and NHS to share intelligence and assess the impact of the Home Office plans.

Repeating misleading information that ascribes powers to Wealden that it does not have, has helped create an atmosphere leading to threats of violence against Wealden councillors. Unfortunately, it seems that outside extremists are now seeking to commandeer resident's anger, for their own purposes. None of which will be in the interests of the town.

The Wealden Council website gives you access to all the latest correspondence and information about the Camp – address below.

Please don't hesitate to **contact me** to discuss these or any other issues important to you.

Contact me on cllr.graham.shaw@wealden.gov.uk

Wealden's website is www.wealden.gov.uk



Katherine Eden-Green, Chair of the Buxted School PTA, and I, look at plans for an extension to the playground and installation of new play equipment. A grant of £5K from my ward budget will form part of a funding package to enable the project to be completed.



A grant of £3.5K also from my ward budget has enabled Buxted Scouts purchase a new marquee to provide additional cover for their events. It's first outing was at their recent fireworks celebration. I also approved a £1.45K grant to St. Marys Church Hall for its much-needed redecoration.



I recently had the pleasure of visiting Poundgate Holiday Cottage to see the work funded through the Rural Business Programme. An £11K grant has enabled the expansion of the business by installing new boiler and water systems, as well as reducing bills through new solar panels. See www.poundgatepark.co.uk for further information.



We have approved a large investment for sport in Uckfield, including improvements for Uckfield Rugby Club so that many more people - seniors, juniors, women and touch/walking players, have proper access, facilities and improved pitches.



Sussex
Wildlife Trust



WILDER WEALDEN PROGRAMME

Wealden Council already undertakes a range of measures to protect and enhance the local natural environment. By a large majority councillors recently agreed to establish a long-term partnership with Sussex Wildlife Trust. Building on existing relationships with the Wilder Ouse Partnership and delivering environmental outcomes within the River Ouse Catchment - covering approximately 30% of the District. Notably, the River Uck, a major tributary of the Ouse, that flows entirely within Wealden, including through Uckfield and Buxted. A multi-year investment totalling £1.95M will help create nature recovery networks and expand habitats, addressing the climate and biodiversity crises, reversing the decline of the last few decades. We will also partner with the successful Weald to Waves project which spans a 100 miles area across Sussex including Buxted, Uckfield, Fletching and Ashdown Forest.