Your Haslemere

The Newsletter of The Haslemere Society
Autumn 2026

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Chairman's Welcome

By Chris Harrison

Welcome to our Autumn 2026 newsletter.

As ever we start with planning matters. Howard Brown gives an overview of the pressures facing our town if it is to comply with national planning objectives. Perhaps the most worrying aspect of the identified potential sites for development is that most of them fall within National Landscape, formerly known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With limited resources, the society will remain vigilant, focusing on the largest projects.

Much of this newsletter reflects the very busy. We have had in organising visits and Blue Plaques. Richard Mason, who has taken over as editor of the magazine from Gareth David, shares three articles, one on our visit to Shulbrede Priory, another on our visit to the Weyborne estate vineyard and 1/3 on the unveiling of a blue plaque to commemorate Michael Bond the creator of Paddington bear. Richard deserves great credit for moving this project forward. The unveiling attracted news coverage at a national and local level from the BBC on both television and radio together of course with a front-page report in the Haslemere Herald. We hope to build further on the connection between Paddington bear and Haslemere in the coming years.

Continuing with our visits, Gareth David reports on our summer outing to Parham House, which boasts the most magnificent collection of artwork.

Focusing on the wider community, society member and museum vice president Sarah Bain reports on the Haslemere Educational Museum's centenary appeal and Áine Hall and Jo Mackay share how they have reinvigorated the This is Haslemere website which has rapidly become the go to place for discovering what is going on in our community.

Unexpectedly, Dutch poet Michiel Jansen-Dings reached out to me following a visit to Hindhead and shares a beautiful poem that he wrote during his visit.

Given the number of other articles that have been brought together, my wife Shirley is taking a rest from her Lost Sons of Haslemere series but she will be returning in the Spring.

Finally, I'd like to thank Gareth David who, as editor, presided over the reinvigoration of our newsletter in 2019 and has now stepped down from the role. Nevertheless, I'm delighted to share that Gareth has agreed to become a trustee of the society and I'm sure we can look forward to continued contributions to our newsletter from his pen.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Planning for the future

by Howard Brown

The Haslemere Society's role in planning is the preservation of Haslemere and its surrounding countryside and to encourage interest and support of the local environment and the overall culture of the town.

We focus on larger building projects generally over 50 dwellings which could directly impact Haslemere or the immediate neighbouring villages. We can look at smaller cases where they may have a negative or possibly positive impact on the community. Incidentally, *"dwelling" as* used in planning donates any property from a 4 bed detached house to a 1bed flat, irrespective of affordability.

The current Waverley call for new sites is to meet the Government's housing targets and has generated interesting as well as controversial proposals. The target for Haslemere remains at 990 out of the expected 7,000 target for Waverley (expected at 1,481 dwellings per year). In April the new borough boundary changes and the forthcoming housing plans may change these numbers.

All submitted land areas are included in the Land Availability Assessment (LAA). The proposed sites are derived from the council, prospective individuals, land owners and developers, who all put forward areas which could be used for new homes. These can be on the preferred Brownfield (land previously built on), Green belt (registered protected land), Greybelt (new category of low grade Green Belt). Of course farm land and open National Landscape should not be built on and this almost completely envelops Haslemere. The LAA was published in July 2026 but Waverley has extended the call until October which may generate more sites to be published by year end.

In the current LAA all proposals require full planning permission. The total properties in the LAA for the 5 year plan is for **743** dwellings rising by an additional 340 within the rolling 10 year plan.

In the green category, where submissions would expect to easily pass through council planning approval, Haslemere is projected to generate 153 Dwellings on the 5 year rolling plan.

- HM020 Haslemere's Key Site - This was in the 2021 plan - "Waitrose & adjacent WBC Car Park" is still an eligible site but with an expected yield of just 30 dwellings.
- HM021 Land at Wey Hill Youth Campus: 34 Dwellings
- HM022 Royal Junior School, Hindhead - 40 Dwellings, but proposed an additional 50 Dwellings over 10 years.
- HM023 Fairground Car Park, Weyhill - 20 Dwellings (but may have commercial / retail unit added)
- HM025 National Trust Car Park, Hindhead - 13 Dwellings
- HM164 Manormead Nursing Home, Tilford Road - 16 Dwellings.

Only the old Royal Junior School at Hindhead is 100% on National Landscape but is already developed so protection is scaled down. The original developer recently pulled out.

Waverley has included submitted 'Red Sites' with a prospective 110 dwellings but these are unlikely to succeed. The sites are mainly on National Landscape or have other key issues. A typical example is HM158 Land South of Scotland Lane, which is completely in National Landscape and is a registered Ancient Woodland, so should never be considered.
Red Sites are:

- HM002 Quail House Farm, Hyde Lane
- HM043 Mills Yard, Bell Road, Haslemere
- HM044 Concours Peugeot, Sturt Road, Haslemere
- HM064 Springfield Farm, Hyde Lane
- HM067 The Royal Senior School, Farnham Lane
- HM158 Land South of Scotland Lane (100% Ancient Woodland!)

Within the LAA there are 21 proposed Amber Sites. These are potential sites but have concerns on planning due to their locality or surrounding environments. Many sites proposed are on the same land areas to the west of Midhurst Road, listed as Dene Farm and Hedgehog Lane.

The 5 year rolling Amber total is **480** dwellings but an additional 290 dwellings over the 10 year plan. These are all on National Landscape designated land, so the list below includes the percentage of the area in the National Landscape.

HM001 Land opposite junction of Nutcombe Lane 100%
HM002 Quail House Farm, Hyde Lane 100%
HM004 Land at Nutcombe Lane, Hazel Grove 100%
HM005 North of Dene End Farm, Midhurst Road 100%
HM007 Land West of Hedgehog Lane (Area A) 87%
HM008 Land West of Hedgehog Lane (Area E) 100%
HM011 Land at Hedgehog Lane 59%
HM013 Primrose Hill, Bunch Lane 100%
HM027 Longdene House and Field Adjoining 93%
HM043 Mills Yard, Bell Road 100%
HM045 Land Adjacent Weydown Hatch, Weydown Road 62%
HM046 Land at Woolmer Hill 100%
HM048 Kingfisher Farm, Sandy Lane 95%
HM052 Land Along Midhurst Road 100%
HM056 Land Surrounding Longdene 82%
HM057 Land at Whitwell Down Estate 49%
HM064 Springfield Farm, Hyde Lane 100%
HM065 Clammer Hill Road, Grayswood 100%
HM067 The Royal Senior School 100%
HM158 Land South of Scotland Lane 100%

There are some interesting Commercial Sites being proposed, presumably put forward by the owners.

- HM003 Land at The Devils Punchbowl Hotel, 52 London Road, Hindhead
- HM044 Concours Peugeot, Sturt Road, Haslemere
- HM013 Primrose Hill, Bunch Lane (Former plant and shrub nursery)

As part of the Planning proposals over the summer, the UK Government and local council put forward consultations on which Haslemere Society has commented. These were for the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) including the Statutory Consultants which has been submitted to the Ministry.These were mainly policy statements on the next iteration, so our comments were to protect the National Landscape purely from the Haslemere point of view. The Society also commented on the Waverley Local Plan which links to the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan which collectively provide guidance on how planning should be carried out and how the local restraints are applied.

Alarms were raised that the NPPF changed the description of National Landscape stating the protection must be considered with "substantial weight" from the original "great weight and highest status of protection" which is of concern. However, the protective policies state a development requires a "strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development". This is now critical.
Please don't understand the foregoing as negative this is typical of the local government processes in an area like this. However the Society will keep monitoring all the LAA proposal and major Planning Applications, but if members do see or hear of any sites, positive or negative, please let the Society know.

Schulbrede Priory visit

By Richard Mason -Trustee

There aren't many buildings in this area that are 836 years old having had only three owners but Schulbrede Priory near Lynchmere is one. Twenty members of the Haslemere Society were lucky enough to have a private tour in May. Our thanks to Ian Russell and daughter Jo for hosting us plus delicious tea and cakes afterwards.
The Priory was first occupied by Augustinian monks from 1190 until Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. He gave it to the Cowdray Estate who occupied it for nearly 400 years before selling it to the Arthur Ponsonby in 1902. The family has lived there ever since.

Following the dissolution much of the Priory was dismantled by locals who valued the stones for their own building purposes. However what remains is significant and offers a glimpse of another world. Maybe this inspired another visitor the composer Hubert Parry to compose some of his works there although not his most famous 'Jerusalem. His connection was via daughter Dorothea who was married to Arthur Ponsonby.
An even more distinguished visitor, in October 2011, was Prince Charles filming a documentary about Hubert Parry.
Today Ian Russell and wife Kate, who is the great granddaughter of Parry, maintain the Priory with their family. They open to the public on the bank holidays in late May and August.
We hope to organise another Society visit next year. Our thanks to Ian and Jo for their generosity.

A Poem from a Dutch visitor to Hindhead

By Michiel Jansen-Dings

Dear Members,
Please find enclosed my poem, "Meridian At Hindhead", written during my stay in Haslemere over the past few days
It's a direct, sensory dialogue with the dark folklore and natural rebirth of Hindhead Common and Gibbet Hill, anchoring its final verses right here in the peace and sheltered oaks of Haslemere and nearby Hurtwood The poem explores how the brutal events of 1786 have been beautifully dissolved and reclaimed by the local landscape—turning the instruments of shame into a "trellis of thyme."
By way of background, I am a poet from the Netherlands, where I experienced mainstream success in the 2000s, including several awards. Recently, my work has found an underground audience in both the United States and Austria.
Given your society's deep dedication to preserving the heritage, architecture, and cultural soul of Haslemere, I felt this piece belonged with your community. I would be thrilled if you consider publishing it in your newsletter and sharing it with your members who cherish the history of the town.
Thank you very much for your time and for your continuous work in protecting the character of Haslemere. The poem is pasted below.
Sincerely,
Michiel Jansen-Dings
The Hague
The Netherlands

Meridian At Hindhead

The immense amphitheatrical curve of the wilderness swallows the morning,
And the forenoon is fierce on the lip of the chasm where shadows are slain;
With a bounty of gold that is blind and ablaze, all the hollow adorning,
The meridian fires are unloosed on the heather, the hill, and the plain.

Through the dust of the ridge where the sand-lizard glides like a splinter of jasper,
And the whortleberry cushions are green in the cracks of the calcified track,
I descend to the slope where the winds of the southland are lower and crisper,
And the tooth of the bramble has eaten the blood and the memory back.

For the stone of the sailor is grey as a skull in the wash of the clover,
And the wood of the gallows where carcasses swung is a trellis of thyme;
The slaughter is dissolved and the shame of the blade and the gibbet is over,
Submerged in the scent of wood-sage and the silence of summer sublime.

And I turn to the north where the smother of towns is a film on the vision,
To the monstrous pit of the streets that I fled from to rescue the soul;
Where the nightshade and nectar of vice held my life in a bitter derision,
Till the hand of a friend tore my ghost from the depths of that venomous bowl.

There London is thinned to a cinder of ash that the sunlight unhedges,
A phantom of soot that is small as the sins that are swallowed in grass;
While Guildford is pearled in the plain, and the oaks on the texturised edges
Of Haslemere shelter the peace that the world cannot break or surpass.
Great Pan is awake where the roots of the Hurt-woods are drinking and growing,
And bright Apollo, from his chariot of fire, has delivered the day;
The mind is a monarch unblinded by pride, in the light that is flowing,
And the vessel of death is a chalice of gold that will never decay.

Michiel Jansen-Dings, 05-08-2026 (Haslemere)

Weyborne Estate Vineyard Visit

By Richard Mason

Photos hardly do justice to this location, the swooping panoramic views south, wooded hillsides and extensive vineyard. In a hollow nestles The Weyborne Estate, formerly known as Blackdown House, built in 1640. Its location was to protect it from the wind, views were secondary then. By contrast the tranquil landscape conceals the site of the Iberia Airlines disaster where on a dark November night in 1967 37 people died.

Now nearly 60 years later on a sunny evening Members of the Society toured the grounds surrounding the mansion including part of the 25 acre vineyard. William Sharpley, commercial director, guided us. He explained that the owner Nick Clarke, who bought the property in 2010, wants to produce the finest sparkling wine in the world. Under a large rectangular Bedouin style tent with an undulating roof line our Members were able to sample some fine wines. One named Oriana was described as authentic powerful and fresh. The wine was complemented by a delicious buffet meal. We could have stayed forever In the exquisite atmosphere. However this was the middle of a working week, we needed to move on but not before taking advantage of a discount on the purchases of the wine.we'd sampled.

Next year we will return and most likely also visit the inside of the mansion. We are very grateful to The Weyborne Estate for their hospitality especially as they are not normally open to the public.

Haslemere Educational Museum Centenary Appeal

By Sarah Bain – Vice-president Haslemere Educational Museum

On 27th August this year Haslemere Educational Museum celebrated occupying its fine Grade II listed Georgian building on the High Street for exactly 100 years. Formerly known as The Lodge, its charm and generous proportions have, for a whole century, offered townsfolk and visitors not only a surprisingly broad cultural experience but also a superb events venue.

We welcome about 35,000 visitors a year, of whom 9,000 are children including groups from over 80 schools participating in our educational programme and our unusually diverse collections number over 400,000 objects.

The Museum was founded in 1888 by eminent London surgeon, Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, who had built up a fine collection of artifacts which he exhibited, firstly at his Inval estate and then from buildings on Museum Hill. Sir Jonathan is now considered to have had a major hand in establishing the educational role of museums and his museum in Haslemere may have been the first to cater for children.

After he died in 1913, a committee, initially chaired by renowned geologist, Sir Archibald Geikie, managed the Museum and, in 1925, with locally-raised funds, bought The Lodge and oversaw the addition of the galleries.

The Lodge has an interesting history which dates back long before the Georgian building of today. By 1604 we know Mr John Shudd, a local landowner, had the leasehold of the property and it remained the Shudd family home for the next 200 years. Between 1735 and 1757 much of the old house was replaced by the classic Georgian building we know today.

The Museum it now houses is an independent charity which receives no regular public funding. It is only because of generous gifts and legacies, almost entirely from local people, that this treasured town asset has survived.

Old buildings, however, and especially listed ones, are never easy to maintain. Further, as this one houses historic objects, there are additional expenses because our artifacts, the heritage we safeguard for all of us and for future generations, require carefully controlled conditions.

Over the last 100 years successive generations of trustees have done their best to maintain the building but, as we look to the next 100 years, heritage surveyors estimate that about £900,000 is needed to secure its future and improve vital facilities.

Our Centenary Appeal aims to raise about £150,000 locally to put up as matched funding to an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the remainder. To that end we have already run a series of successful events, including an Appeal launch, a Summer Fair and monthly Centenary lectures and have been very pleased to have raised nearly £100,000 to date.

Up and coming events include our annual bonfire party, 7th November, a Greek-themed dinner cooked by the U3A men s cookery group, 21st November, and the lectures which continue until May 2027. See http://www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk

All support, be it a donation or attending our forthcoming events, will help secure the future of the Museum and will be very gratefully received.

Society visit to Parham House

By Gareth David

An enthusiastic group of Society members joined our latest summer coach excursion on 26th August, to visit another of the area's grand stately homes the remarkable Parham House, between Pulborough and Storrington in West Sussex.

For those unfamiliar with the property, the Grade I-listed Elizabethan country house is the centre-piece of the 380-acre Parham Park, which comprises formal and ornamental gardens around the house together with 370 acres of park, woodland, lakes and a herd of around 200 fallow deer.

With the Dissolution of the Monasteries Henry VIII granted the land to Robert Palmer of Henfield in 1540. Work on the house began in 1577 for the Palmer family, then in 1601, Thomas Palmer sold Parham to Thomas Bisshopp of Henfield, whose family and descendants, the Zouche family, owned the estate until the early 20th century.

In 1922, Mary, 17th Baroness Zouche, sold Parham to the Hon. Clive Pearson, second son of Weetman Pearson, 1st Viscount Cowdray. The house was then in poor repair, but over the next two decades Pearson and his wife Alicia, working with architect Albert Victor Heal, restored the house and developed much of the present garden, with restoration, refurbishment and decorative work continuing into the 1960s.

Parham became one of the first stately homes in England to admit visitors when it opened to the public in 1948. After Clive Pearson's death, the estate passed to his

daughter Veronica Mary Tritton, who continued opening the house until her death in 1993. In 1996 the family's descendants transferred ownership to the Parham Park Trust and management of the house and estate to Parham Park Ltd. Since 1994 the chatelaine has been Lady Emma Barnard, great-niece of Veronica Tritton, who lives at the house with her family.

On arrival at Parham we were divided into two groups for guided tours of the three-story house and were given a detailed account of its history, restoration, and a chance to hear about its remarkable art collection.The unique feature of the Society's trip was having expert guides showing us the art.

Parham today contains collections of historic furniture, paintings, books, textiles, clocks, rugs and carpets assembled or arranged during the 20th-century restoration by Clive and Alicia Pearson. The house is particularly known for its 17th-century needlework, which is displayed in the state rooms and gallery spaces.

After our fascinating guided tours of the house, members were free to visit the gardens, with others taking a short stroll to another Grade I-Listed building, St.

Peter's church, which dates from the 12th century, boasts a 14th century lead font and box pews, and is regarded as a particularly fine example of an estate church, now hosting Holy Communion services on the first Sunday of each month.

From Parham House the Society coach trip then went on to the Badgers pub, south of Petworth, where we enjoyed an extensive buffet lunch, after which members were free to visit the nearby Petworth station, which had closed to passengers in February 1955, but has been extensively restored as holiday accommodation and now also features a dining car in the station platform and four former Pullman carriages, each converted into two luxurious en-suite guest rooms. The overall feedback from Members was that this was a culturally rich and informative visit

Paddington Bear Blue Plaque at Michael Bond's former home

By Richard Mason

The picture says it all. Paddington Bear brings joy to not only children but adults too. The Haslemere Society had to wait until the centenary of the birth of the creator, Michael Bond, before the Blue Plaque rules allowed a plaque. Michael lived in Farnham Lane from 1968 until 1978. Pictured at the unveiling on August 22nd are Michael's daughter Karen, who grew up there, and Mayor Jacquie Keen. Michael wrote three of his fifteen Paddington Books whilst living at Fairacre on Farnham Lane. He also wrote the Olga da Polga stories inspired by Karen's pet guinea pig.

The plaque was organised very quickly. In late May Richard knocked on the door believing the house to be tenanted only to be surprised to meet the Australian owner Stephanie and English husband Neil. Within two weeks Stephanie and Neil Stephenson along with Richard plus Society Chairman Chris Harrison were being given the guided tour of the house by Karen. The Stephensons generously agreed to sponsor the plaque as well as hosting a marmalade sandwiches and tea unveiling ceremony for 25 guests. Now Haslemere Society plaque unveilings don't get much advance publicity however this one was being mentioned every hour on BBC

Breakfast South on the day of the unveiling. Later they showed a video of the unveiling. Not surprisingly a crowd of onlookers also found their way to Fairacre in time for the ceremony. Clearly this event has touched many more people in Haslemere than could have been anticipated as evidenced by ideas we've received. The underlying theme is to make more of the Paddington connection with Haslemere for the benefit of the community. A statue in the town is a favourite idea plus children's activities and competitions involving bears and marmalade. This is only the beginning so do contact us with your suggestions.

This is Haslemere: connecting our community

By Áine Hall and Jo Mackay

This is Haslemere is a volunteer-run community website designed to help people discover more about the town, find useful local information, feel more connected to the community around them and find ways to get involved.

This is Haslemere grew out of the *Haslemere for Ukraine* initiative. The response to the war in Ukraine showed just how much could be achieved when local people, charities, businesses and volunteers were able to connect quickly and work together. From that came the idea of creating a permanent online resource that could help strengthen those connections across the wider community.

The site brings together information that is often scattered across individual websites, social media pages, noticeboards and newsletters. It includes local events, businesses, schools, clubs, groups and volunteering opportunities, all in one place. But it is so much more than just a directory. Alongside practical information, we regularly feature the people and organisations that make Haslemere such a special place to live. We uncover stories that many residents may not previously have known about.

One of the strongest themes to emerge has been the enormous contribution made by volunteers. So much of what happens in Haslemere depends on people giving their time. Volunteers help run clubs and societies, organise events, support charities, maintain community organisations and provide vital services for local residents.

Yet volunteering does not always mean making a major commitment. It might involve helping at one event a year, joining a committee, offering a particular skill or simply giving a few hours of time when needed.

Through *This is Haslemere*, we hope to make it easier for people who would like to get involved but are unsure where to begin. Our volunteering directory helps connect residents with local organisations, while our articles introduce some of the people already contributing to the town.

We also want the website to help people discover things happening on their doorstep. Haslemere has a remarkable number of clubs, groups, events and organisations, but it is surprisingly easy to live here for years without knowing some of them exist. By bringing this information together, we hope to encourage people to try something new, attend a local event, join a group or support a community organisation.

The website is currently run by Jo Mackay, Áine Hall and Colin Short, but the aim has always been for it to be a collaborative community resource. We welcome suggestions for stories, information about forthcoming events and details of organisations that should be included in our directories. We are particularly keen to hear about the people and groups quietly making a difference locally.

Haslemere has a rich history, but its story is still being written every day by the people who live and work here. In a small way, we hope *This is Haslemere* can help record some of those stories while also encouraging more people to play an active part in the community.

Ultimately, *This is Haslemere* is about making it easier for people to feel connected to the place they call home.

Find out more at thisishaslemere.co.uk.

I still wonder if we've done enough to celebrate the fact that Michael Bond once lived in Haslemere.