

The Local Column

4th February 2005

The news publication from The Local Channel

Alistair Burt MP

Donations are just the start
Local communities build the future

There has been a warm and generous response from the British people to the plight of those caught up in the dreadful disaster of Boxing Day 2004. The immediate aid and relief effort, though not yet over, has received record amounts of publicly donated money.

But, what next? What happens when the eye of the world moves on, as it must?

Whilst recognising the need to ensure that other charity and relief efforts in different parts of the world will need support, we know that the reconstruction of the communities around the Indian Ocean rim will take time and substantial continuing underpinning.

A letter of mine was published in 'The Times' on December 30th 2004 putting forward a mechanism for 'twinning' communities in this country with those affected overseas. Although details have still to be worked out, some initial steps have been taken, and I would like to invite you to take an interest.

I suggest that local authorities in this country, co-ordinated by the LGA (local Government Association) offer to act as a focal point in their

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Massive wave hits paradise

communities for the voluntary desire to help. Councils register this commitment with the LGA. In due course, Governments, Aid agencies and the UN will have worked out with affected governments in the Tsunami area what major projects will be supported by them. But I believe this will leave countless small scale projects, from the re-supply of school books to repairs to a community hall, without help as they may not be a priority, but must surely be done.

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Alistair Burt continued

If at that stage we can match those projects with areas in the UK, we can make personal links between churches, temples, mosques, schools and voluntary groups here and overseas. This will ensure a continuing personal relationship, and make fundraising much easier, for we would be collecting for something we know about.

I do not suggest that local authorities run such efforts. Local people and groups should do so, but if there is no co-ordination at all then some areas will be forgotten, and some may find it impossible to discover projects they would like to support.

Town, Parish and community councils are ideally placed to coordinate the effort of local people and groups thereby giving smaller scale projects a local focus. Through local councils local people will be able to observe the real progress on a project they adopt and support and any funds raised will contribute to a scheme with an end result that people can clearly see.



Alistair Burt MP (North East Bedfordshire)

This idea has been supported by all sides in Parliament, and the LGA are actively engaged. Although there are lots of variables (and some areas already have links established for other purposes over the years) this mechanism should enable those who need things to be connected with those who can help. What form that help takes should be decided locally, always respecting the rule that those overseas must be in the lead.

These are only draft ideas but if you are interested, could I ask you to contact Sir Brian Briscoe, the Chief Executive at the LGA at Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ 0207 664 3131 (www.lga.gov.uk) and ask for more information and how to be registered in due course.

Alistair Burt MP (North East Bedfordshire)



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Community news

More and more communities are getting on line with The Local Channel. This is very encouraging progress for us. We welcome onboard: -

Communities	Primary PA		Secondary PA	
Lexham	Mr	Neil W D	Foster	
Harmby	Mrs	Tracey B	Pritchard	Jim Lindsey (chair)
Grosmont	Mr	Robert J	B	Wilcox
Shelley (Parish Meeting)	Mr	Andrew	H	Scott
Blockley	Mr	G E	Gregg (clerk)	
Cropredy	Mr	Roger	Gooding (clerk)	
Little Ouseburn		Zillah	Hopps	
Thorpe Underwoods		Zillah	Hopps	
Kirby Hall		Zillah	Hopps	
Goostrey	Mr	Michael	G	Ball
Leysdown		Jennifer	Mazzocchi	
Buckerell		Jackie	Sheil	
Borden		Jennifer	Mazzocchi	
Hever	Mr	Peter	Harrison	
Kingmore	Mr	Michael	Jones	
Saltney (Town)		G	Williams	
Stroud	Mr	Lionel	Fanshawe	
Ovington	Mr	John	Goode	Rod Rumsby
Topcliffe	Mr	Howard	Wilson	
Murton	Mrs	Lesley	Armstrong	
Stock & Bradley	Mr	Roger	Dean	
Overton	Mrs	Katharine	Crockford	Mrs Sue Glover (Chair)
Pencarreg (Cyngor Bro)	Mr	Eric	Williams	
Woburn Sands	Mrs	Lynn	Stapleton	
Cadney-cum-Howsham	Mr	Charles	Brindley	
Oare		Jennifer	Mazzocchi	



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Community News continued

Communities	Primary PA		Secondary PA	
Sproston	Mr	Alan	Hartopp (clerk)	
Ganton & Potter				
Bromton	Miss	Kate	Barker	
Colnbrook and Poyle	Mr	R.L.N	Hewson	
Waddesdon		Alasdair	Mckenzie	
Otterburn	Mr	John	Hartshorne	
Coity higher	Mr	L R	Huxtable	
Bridekirk		Kathleen	Gibson	
				Richard Bunny (chair)
Bodelwyddan	Mr	Martin	Wright	
Pickworth	Mr	Joseph	Seddon	
Furneux Pelham		Caroline	Noble	
Buckfastleigh (town)	Mrs	Judith	Hart (clerk)	

Total number of communities who have signed up with The Local Channel so far

976

Certificates

Congratulations to **Caroline Noble** of "Furneux Pelham" parish council who has made her website the fastest growing site this month and has qualified for a Bronze Certificate.

Are you a Bronze Silver or Gold Parish?

If you think you have achieved a certificate status, please contact us on: 0800 38 986 38 and we will check your site and award your certificate.

Congratulations to all who have achieved a certificate status:

Community	Parish Administrator		Certificate
Furneux Pelham	Caroline	Noble	Bronze
Driffield and Harnhill	Alex	Whitaker	Bronze
Broughton	Mr	Graham Cowley	Silver
Slindon	Mr	Kenneth Beere	Silver
East Tytherley	Cllr	Michael Scoones	Silver
Kessingland	Mr	Liam Martin (Chair)	Gold
Romsey Extra	Mr	Rod Simpson	Gold

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The Local Channel site statistics

The site is attracting more and more interest. As a result you can see large numbers of page views, hits and user session in the table below.

Report: Summary - www.thelocalchannel.co.uk	
Date Range: 24/12/2004 - 24/01/2005	
Total Sessions	13,231.00
Total Page views	974,467.00
Total Hits	996,159.00
Total Bytes Transferred	8.38 GB
Average Sessions Per Day	413.47
Average Page views Per Day	30,452.09
Average Hits Per Day	31,129.97
Average Bytes Transferred Per Day	268.07 MB
Average Page views Per Session	73.65
Average Hits Per Session	75.29
Average Bytes Per Session	663.89 KB
Average Length of Session	00:09:22

The hits and page views have gone down this month, due to the new homepage not refreshing as much as the old one. But the user's sessions have doubled! Meaning there are twice as many people visiting our site daily than last month.

The manual has also had 700 Downloads since it was put live in December, it can be found at www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/manual. And we have had 70 downloads of past editions of The Local Column, which can be found at www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/newsletter

The past month has been the most active month for The Local Channel Portal, than ever before.



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Look out for new developments on the site

We are continuing with our improvements programme and whilst the list of enhancements on the parish content management section is not so long this month, we have made many improvements in our back office. While this is not visible to our administrators it vastly improves the smooth running of the site. These improvements include better use of memory, new TLC administration tools and improvements to the running of the TLC general pages. However we have completed user improvements as follows: -

1. Improved usability of content manager making some aspects 800*600 compatible
2. Ability for parish / community / town administrators to assign other users as administrators of their parish / community / town web site.
3. Organisation / Action Group / Business catchment area management improved
4. Complete removal of old home page
5. Image caption is no longer mandatory when adding organisation / action group web pages
6. New Web Accessibility information page
7. Improved Local Councillors section
8. Text editor added to Planning applications

The continuing improvement work list includes: -

1. Simplify navigation with the use of categories for business and organisation etc
2. Continue work on new Diary functionality
3. Continue work on incorporating an Archive section for old diary and news items plus old minutes and agendas etc
4. Start work on improving registration
5. Minutes and Agenda sequencing to date of meeting
6. Improved people linked with community section
7. Start working on trail so that you know which page or which community etc you are viewing / editing

We are still working on the cutting and pasting of text from a word document into a webpage. We will let you know as soon as the text editor has been corrected. In the mean time remove punctuation from word documents and add it back using the current text editor.

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TLC Forthcoming Events

The Local Channel is constantly on the road, attending association events to encourage local councils to participate in the fastest growing local network. For the early part of 2005 we will be at the following events:

Date	Event	Location
23rd February	SLCC Regional Conference	Preston
6th April	SLCC Regional Conference	Horley
28th April	SLCC Regional Conference	Beverley

We look forward to meeting you at one of these events. In the meantime for more information contact Haydn Selwyn-Jones on 0800 38 986 38

The Community for Younger People

The last page of this month's news letter is a piece for attracting younger people in your community to form a youth council. There are now a few across the country and given the growth in this area, The Local Channel would like to support Youth Councils. We will provide free websites for youth councils. If you want to encourage younger members of your area to form a youth council, why not print off and distribute the youth page of the news letter. We are asking younger people to talk to us about their requirements of a youth council website and hopefully this will encourage them to call us to get things started. On the same theme Gordon Brown our Chancellor of the Exchequer has plans to offer young people, on a gap year, financial support for undertaking voluntary work in their local community. Mr Brown intends to extend an existing pilot scheme with the aim of getting 1 million young people doing voluntary work.



A first step may actually be getting a youth council going and for that council to take advantage of Gordon's scheme and help young people on a gap year to become involved in voluntary opportunities. More information can be found on the BBC website.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4221499.stm



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Dispatches

Well done to everyone in last month's dispatches. It is noticeable that many sites are developing nicely and we are pleased this month to have new people who have clearly worked hard and are showing us something special, deserving a mention in dispatches. Congratulations to: -

Quedgeley and Peter Richardson

Well what can we say about Quedgeley? Excellent use of all sections in particular take a look at the web page under community information titled "Diary for the Year" this is just great. There is lots of good information on this site. Well done Peter Richardson. Peter has used different fonts, character sizes and colours to great effect. The site is interesting and easy to view. Some great ideas in here have a look, I'm sure Richard won't mind if you steal a few of his initiatives. www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/quedgeley

North Kilworth and Paul Whitehead

Wow, we nearly missed this one. Everyone seems a little shy please tell us about the great sites you are creating! The content on this site is amazing there is every thing. Not only that, but the layout is excellent too. Nice one Paul. www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/northkilworth

Whitehill and Bordon and Pat Newman

Pat is doing a great job on this site making good use of the minutes and agenda section, but the real reason for this mention is the fact that Whitehill and Bordon Town Council were the first council to post a Freedom of Information Act publication scheme. Well done.

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/whitehillandbordon

Romsey Extra and Rod Simpson

Nice to see Rod is updating his site with news and diary events. In addition Rod has started posting planning applications on the site; this is useful information for local residents and shows good community involvement especially when you see the number of local organisation and businesses listed.

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/romseyextra

Well that's all for this month, do you know someone deserving a mention in dispatches, or perhaps you do and we should look at your site. Let me know, email ed@thelocalchannel.co.uk and let us recognise and share your good work.

Tsunami twinning with The Local Channel

Hopefully you have read the article on the front page by Alistair Burt MP and you will be getting involved to help the ongoing rebuilding of devastated communities.

The key to maintaining a development programme, of a charitable nature, is keeping people engaged in the project and up-to-date with how their donations are improving conditions.

The Local Channel picked up on Alistair's idea and Alistair was good enough to provide the article. We want to help with the twinning idea by providing your local Asian community with a dedicated website, linked to your community website, for the purpose of informing, engaging and motivating people or groups in your area to help with the rebuilding projects in the tsunami areas.

We have both a short term and longer term solution. The longer term solution we are working on is to map the affected areas in the same way that parishes are mapped in The Local Channel website today. This effort will depend on the demand we receive and will be available if we have sufficient demand. However in the short term we already have websites that can be used, our organisation websites. We can make these available to you and linked to your community website so that you can be up and running now. The organisation site can be migrated to the mapped Asian community site when we have completed the build.

If your community would like to twin to an area in the tsunami affected part of Asia and you would like to use a Local Channel website for engaging people to contribute please e-mail Keith.cooper@thelocalchannel.co.uk providing information as follows: -

Subject: Tsunami website

Your name

Your telephone number

Your parish name

I will be in touch with you to discuss the possibilities and authorise the new website.

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From the Editor

Goodness me what a positive and busy time this is. The high number of parishes adopting The Local Channel this month has given us a total of 976 on-line. In addition public activity is increasing and through your efforts the content on the site is going through the roof.

You know, The Local Column is growing in circulation, not quite as fast as The Local Channel, but we are receiving a number of requests (32 in January alone) for copies from Councillors, Clerks and MP's, Very encouraging. The total circulation is now around 1200, it would be nice to see a few letters or comments from our Parish Administrators in the news letter. Why not share your thoughts, ideas and website successes with the wider community. Come on e-mail ed@thelocalchannel.co.uk and tell me what you think, publish and be damned.

Dr Who is about to hit our TV screens again, blimey that started in the 60's. Well I got to wondering, could you give a Dalek a virus via email or over the net? Or maybe send a cyber man into a spin with a spam? Well make sure you are safe from the monsters on the net and keep your virus checker up-to-date.



Who knows what the Doctor will bring with him this time around

The current news letter and back copies are now available on-line at www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/newsletter.

Well done to everyone mentioned in dispatches and those receiving their certificates. Keep up the good work!

Remember to check the news on The Local Channel website front page and why not send us an article.

Please remember to let me know what you think. ed@thelocalchannel.co.uk. If nothing else comes to mind nominate someone for a mention in dispatches.

Ed



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Youth Council Possibilities

Do **YOU** ever feel like you're ignored, just because of your age?

Do **YOU** have a valid point, but no where to voice it?

Do **YOU** feel there is no youth aims in your community?

Are **YOU** aged 14-21?

Do **YOU** feel there is something missing?

THEN WHY NOT CREATE YOUR OWN YOUTH COUNCIL FOR YOUR PARISH!

Many Youth Councils already exist across the UK, campaigning to get things changed in their local communities such as buildings and parks, so they can have something to do in their communities!

So why not promote **YOUR** voice, as a voice to be heard!!

Why don't you check Horsham Youth Council out!

www.horshamyouthcouncil.org.uk

The Local Channel will host **YOUR** Youth Council web site for free as a sub section of the Parish Council sites that we already host. But we want to know what **YOU** want to have on the site, so we can design and build it around **YOU!** This could be your chance to make a difference

Why don't you email Ed on ed@thelocalchannel.co.uk for more information, or to submit your ideas!!!



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Please remember that your feedback is important, so let us know: -

1. What would you like to see in the newsletter
2. Do you find the articles relevant
3. Does the style compliment the articles
4. What would you change

Please e-mail your suggestions to ed@thelocalchannel.co.uk.

If this communication has reached you in error please let me know at this address and we will remove you from our list.

The Local channel can be found on www.thelocalchannel.co.uk and contacted at

The Local Channel
Estate Office
Trafalgar Park
Downton
Salisbury
SP5 3QG

0800 38 986 38 (Normal office hours)

If your e-mail or address details have changed. Please remember to tell The Local Channel

E-mail info@thelocalchannel.co.uk

To find out more about The Local Channel please visit www.thelocalchannel.co.uk

The Local Channel Ltd

The Estate Office, Trafalgar Park, Downton, Salisbury, SP5 3QG

Released 4th-February-2005

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