

Friends of Lewes

the Lewes Civic Society



Spring 2010 Newsletter

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

On 31st March the South Downs National Park finally became a reality and the following day the South Downs National Park Authority came into being, albeit in a shadow mode until it takes up its powers on 1st April 2011. Whilst the existing South Downs Joint Committee will continue to operate until this latter date and no changes will be made to other functions in this shadow year the fact that the National Park is now established means that it will be taken into account by the District Council in determining planning applications. In addition it changes permitted development rights in so far as the more restrictive rights that have hitherto applied in the conservation area now apply across the town. Members envisaging minor developments should therefore check with the District Councils Planning Department whether they need to apply for planning permission.



More generally the Society is in touch with National Park Authority officers and has given them a list of possible enhancements or improvements they might either undertake or encourage. In addition it has taken part in discussions to determine how the Authority might function including whether and how it

could delegate some of its planning powers and its role in relation to access issues. Whilst the Authority becomes the statutory access authority when it takes up its powers next year the responsibility for rights of way remains with the County Council and how these two apparently conflicting duties will relate to each other remains to be resolved.

DEVELOPMENTS IN LEWES

Despite the Society's objection the District Council have approved the extension to Tesco and it is anticipated that work will start shortly. Waitrose also have in mind an extension to their premises and the Society is in touch with them about their proposals. Particular care will be needed in this location to comply with the latest Government flood guidance. The Society is also in touch with the Police Authority about their proposals for the West Street Police Station which will become surplus to their requirements once the new Police Station in North Street is open. Recent planning applications to which the Society has objected include the development in Stewards Inn Lane and the proposed houses on the site of the former Meridian public house which we considered to be an over-development using an unsympathetic design and materials. Other possible developments which have been mooted are the Community Land Trust's proposals for the Phoenix quarter and the Wealden Line Campaign's proposals for a railway line from Hamsey to Ashcombe, including a tunnel under the Race Hill, in addition to their original proposals for a line from Uckfield to Lewes.

PLANNING POLICY

Each year the Society urges the District Council to make greater provision in its budgets for conservation projects but although the desirability of having a grant scheme is acknowledged, nothing has been done to reinstate one. The Society has also expressed concern to the District Council about their acceptance of planning applications where either inadequate or inaccurate plans are submitted since this makes it difficult to consider them properly.

TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

Concern has been expressed to the Police about what appears to be a lack of enforcement in the town of traffic legislation such as speed and weight limits, using one-way streets in the wrong direction, ignoring bans on particular turns and parking on pavements.



STREET NAMES OF LEWES

Kim Clark has been updating the late Les Davey's book on the street names of Lewes and this revised edition should shortly be available in the shops at a cover price of £5.50.

ELISABETH HOWARD MEMORIAL

The bicycle rack to commemorate Elisabeth Howard has now been installed in the Grange Gardens close to the Southover Road entrance nearest to the house. A plaque will shortly be fitted in the vicinity. Thanks are expressed to all those

members who contributed to the cost and further donations would be welcome as those already received do not yet cover the costs involved.



CIVIC VOICE AND NATIONAL TRUST

The Society was one of the first civic societies to join Civic Voice, the new national organisation representing the interests of such bodies. Whilst the increased fee we are paying to Civic Voice has led to an increase in our subscription rates it has also brought a benefit. This is that individual members of the Society can obtain a free day access pass this year to any National Trust property during normal opening times. The free pass is available to download by using this link www.civicvoice.org.uk/nationaltrustcivicvoiceoffer. The pass is transferable and can be given to friends or family if a member is already a member of the National Trust. For those of our members without internet access a free day pass will be available by sending a stamped addressed envelope requesting one to Civic Voice, Unit 101, 82 Wood Street, The Tea Factory, Liverpool L1 4DQ and giving your contact details and the name of this Society in your request.

e-mail communication

To receive this newsletter, and Society notices, please e-mail mscotgrove@aol.com

FUTURE EVENT

The Society's Autumn General Meeting will be held on Thursday 23 September at 7.45pm in the Lecture Room of the Town Hall.

