

# Friends of Lewes

the Lewes Civic Society



## ***Autumn 2012 Newsletter***

### **LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY**

The Joint District Council/National Park Authority draft Core Strategy is about to be published and comments sought on it from the public. This document forms a significant part of the Local Plan which will eventually be produced to replace the existing District Council Local Plan. It will then remain in force until the National Park Authority produces its own Plan in over 2 years time. Essentially a Local Plan sets policies for the use of land and is the document against which planning applications are considered. It is clearly important for the Society to consider the proposals carefully and comment where appropriate on them. For example it has been rumoured that the Core Strategy will propose that land at Old Malling Farm could be zoned for housing but the Society has consistently opposed use of this highly conspicuous green field site for such use when there are brown field sites in the town that could accommodate any foreseeable housing demand.

### **NORTH STREET RE-DEVELOPMENT**

Santon, the owners of the majority of the lower North Street site, are waiting for the draft Core Strategy to be published before mounting a consultation exercise to establish how the public consider their site could be redeveloped. The Society accepts that this currently scruffy site is suitable for housing and possibly some retail development so long as a river wall is provided and there are good links with the existing town centre. The Society also considers that a riverside path

should be provided as part of any



redevelopment and that the proposals should form part of an integrated scheme that also includes the Waitrose and Bus Station sites.

### **LEWES CONSERVATION AREA**

Some 5 years after an appraisal of the Lewes conservation area was produced, the National Park Authority will shortly be publishing a draft Management Plan for it. This will be carefully studied by the Society. In addition the National Park Authority have agreed to extend the boundary of the conservation area to include land up to and including the Cemetery as recommended in the appraisal. This extension includes County Hall and the former St Anne's School, and thus the added protection that this designation brings will apply to any future redevelopment of these sites.

## **FALCON WHARF**

Planning permission has been given to redevelop Falcon Wharf, which is the low building adjacent to the river in Railway Lane, with a building more in keeping with those either side of it. Although it may be some time before the development takes place the view from Cliffe Bridge should be improved when the development is completed.

## **SOUTH STREET**

The Planning Inspectorate has upheld the appeal into the house proposed at the very end of the built up area of South Street. The Society had objected to the planning application as it did not consider the building proposed was appropriate in this conspicuous entrance to the town on grounds of scale, height and the materials to be used.

## **FISHER STREET/WEST STREET JUNCTION**

The County Council are consulting about a possible change in priority at this junction. Whilst any change could cause some congestion on traffic approaching Lewes on



the Offham Road, it would have the benefit of reducing queuing traffic in Fisher Street and, at times, Station Street with the resultant reduction in air pollution. On balance the Society supports the proposed changes.

## **EARWIG CORNER**

The Society was represented at a meeting with County Council officials about Earwig Corner. It was accepted that the junction is

sub-standard and the weight of traffic causes congestion which can reach the centre of Lewes in the evening peak hour. The County Council are therefore commissioning



consultants to consider all options and make recommendations to them. They envisage that financing any improvements can be achieved through payments by developers planning new housing to the north and east of Lewes. The Society agrees that improvements are needed to the junction but would much prefer that they are either on site or close to it and not as far north as Upper Stoneham Farm as was proposed almost 25 years ago.

## **KINGSTON ROAD CYCLEWAY**

Whilst news that this cycleway is progressing through statutory channels is welcome, the Society is disappointed that its suggestion that a refuge be provided where the cycleway crosses Kingston Road has not been taken up. Without such a refuge this crossing point will be quite dangerous in view of limited visibility and fast moving traffic and it is hoped that the further consideration will be given to this proposal.

## **STREET LIGHTING**

The Society has expressed its support for the County Council's proposed reduction of street lighting in the early hours of the morning.

## **DISTRICT COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

As part of its effort to reduce expenditure the District Council are considering how its buildings in Lewes are used with the possibility of selling them in mind. In particular it seems that they intend to concentrate their office accommodation in Southover House and cease using Lewes House for this purpose next summer. In addition the Registrars office will be moving



from Southover Grange to Sackville House in South Downs Road as part of these changes. Since it would be detrimental to the amenities of the town if Southover Grange or its



gardens ceased to be available for community use the Society is in touch with the District Council about their intentions for this and the other Lewes buildings in their portfolio.

## **TREE SURVEY**

The Society has been successful in being offered a grant from the National Park Authority's Sustainable Communities Fund to undertake a tree survey in Lewes. A contractor has been appointed to do this and to make recommendations as to where new

trees might be planted. When all this is to hand consideration will be given as to how to take the matter forward including how new tree planting might be financed.

## **FRIENDS OF LEWES AWARDS**

In 2013 the Society intends to make awards or give commendations to projects that have been well- built and enhance the townscape of Lewes. Members are invited to put forward specific projects for the awards panel to consider. They can be either new build, extensions, alterations or projects that enhance the public realm, but should have been completed within the last 3 years.

## **BOOKS**

We are grateful to Audrey Jarvis for taking on responsibility for marketing our books to various shops in Lewes. Members can, of course, buy our books, including the new one on Lewes Twittens, at reduced prices at Society events.

## **PAUL MILLMORE**

We are delighted that the Brighton and Hove Bus Company are naming one of their new hybrid buses after Paul Millmore, who was an Executive Committee member who passed away earlier this year. The bus will apparently be used on route 28 so that it is seen in Lewes.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:**

The 2012-13 series of lectures continues – each is at 7.45pm in the Town Hall's Lecture Room. Free to members.

**November 15<sup>th</sup>** : **The History of Lewes Old Grammar School** by David Arscott, author of a recent book on this topic.

**January 9<sup>th</sup>** : **The Wildlife of Lewes** by Michael Blencowe, Sussex Wildlife Trust's Community Wildlife Officer

**February 28<sup>th</sup>** : **The Lost Parish of St Mary in the Market Place:** telling the story of St Mary's Lane in Lewes (now Station Street) from the earliest times until the 1800s. Debby Matthews, a resident of the street, shares her research

**March 21<sup>st</sup>** : Annual General Meeting

On Monday **May 13<sup>th</sup>** the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies, to which the Society belongs, will be having a speaker about water resources in the South East at their evening Annual General Meeting in Haywards Heath and members of this Society are welcome to attend. More details will be given in the next circulation.