

Friends of Lewes



the Lewes Civic Society

Summer 2013 Newsletter

Former Magistrates Court

Quora Developments have submitted planning applications to demolish the former magistrates court and replace it with a development consisting of retail units on the ground floor and a Premier Inn on two upper floors. In view of the significance of the application the National Park Authority will determine this later in the year. Whilst the Society had no objection to the concept of a low cost hotel or retail development, since this could be preferable to having a disused building which gradually becomes derelict, it was not happy with the design proposed and thus it has objected to the development on



these grounds. In particular it does not consider that the proposed building will enhance the street scene, which is part of the conservation area, and that it is planned to be too close to the listed Fitzroy House. In earlier discussions with the developer the Society made suggestions as to how its concerns could be met, but regrettably these largely fell on deaf ears.

North Street Quarter

Discussions continue about this development and there will be a further public consultation about the proposals at the Town Hall on



Saturday 21 September. The developers are undertaking relevant research before drafting their proposals and this has included a flood options report, public realm report, a retail impact study, traffic impact assessment and auditing cultural infrastructure in the town. They have also set up a design mentoring group and the Society has been represented on this.

Tesco

When Tesco applied for planning permission to extend their store in 2008 the Society objected on the grounds of the deleterious effect it would have on other traders in the town. However, despite this objection, the application was approved although apart from demolishing some former industrial buildings Tesco has not commenced the extension. They have now applied for the planning

permission to be renewed and the Society has objected on the grounds that the establishment of the National Park coupled with the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework makes the background against which the application should be assessed very different.

Dripping Pan

The Society has been made aware of a significant development scheme that the Football Club have in mind for the Dripping Pan which will include better facilities for players and spectators and making provision for community use of them when not in use for football matches. As specific plans have not been seen it has not expressed a view on the proposals.

Foundry Cottage

The Society is disappointed that in the renovations carried out to a dilapidated Foundry Cottage off Cliffe High Street the original bars on which fish were smoked were removed, as they were part of the industrial heritage of this part of Lewes.

Southover Grange and the Maltings

The County and District Councils have agreed to swap ownership of the house at Southover Grange and the Maltings, which has become vacant following the move of the Records Office to the Keep near Stanmer Park. This



will enable the County Council to continue to house the Registrar at Southover Grange, with improved access, as well as offer the rooms for public hire when not needed by the

Registrar. The use which the District Council intends making of the Maltings is not yet clear but the Society is being involved in discussions about this. It is understood that the gardens at Southover Grange will remain in District Council ownership and they will continue to be responsible for their maintenance.

Cycleways

Work on an improved cycleway between

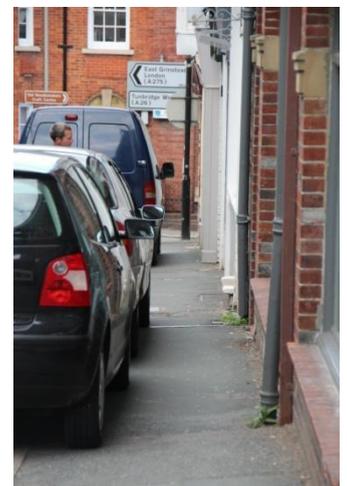


Lewes and Kingston has commenced. The County Council have held a consultation about extending the current cycleway from Ringmer nearer to Earwig Corner as well as

seeking opinion on whether it should be routed close to this junction or via Mill Road. The Society considers that the latter route is unsuitable and that the cycleway should be routed through Earwig Corner in such a way that it does not prejudice future improvements to the junction.

Pavement parking and repairs

The Society is concerned at the prevalence of pavement parking in the town. Not only does it impede the passage of pedestrians but in many cases has led to the breaking up of the pavement surface. It was consulted by the County Council on which roads it would like to see pavement



parking banned and put forward the upper High Street, Fisher Street, Station Street and Southover High Street.

Where a pavement in the conservation area breaks up or is dug up by a utility company the original surface is often not reinstated, even after allowing the period of 6 months



grace that contractors are given to do so. The County Council also regard the conservation area as much smaller than has been designated and this is something that the Society has asked the National Park Authority, as the body which is responsible for conservation areas, to take up with them. However it would be helpful if members could report examples of temporary repairs being made to pavements, often with black top, together with the date they were done to the Society so that if proper reinstatement does not take place within 6 months it can be pursued with the County Council. Pictures of such temporary reinstatements would also be helpful. Please send them to enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk or send hard copies to the Society at the Town Hall.

Trees

The Society's Urban Arboretum project is moving forward and plans are being drawn up for some initial plantings and longer term work.



In addition a tree photography competition is being run (see our website for details). The finalist entries will be on display, and winners will be judged and announced, at the lecture being held on Thursday October 17th.

Society trips

Two trips were organised for members this summer and were to:-

- a) Rye on 12 June where the Rye Conservation Society provided an interesting and informative day coupled with a high standard of hospitality. We had a chance to discuss issues of mutual concern and visit the historic streets including two private gardens that are hidden behind them. A reciprocal visit to Lewes is planned for 2014.
- b) Middle Street Synagogue in Brighton on 9 July where we were able to go inside a really remarkable building and have an interesting talk about the history of Judaism in Brighton & Hove.

Dates for your diary

Heritage Open Days 2013 12 – 15 September

The Society has taken the lead in organising this free national event in Lewes this year, with sponsorship from Strutt and Parker and the District Council. The programme, which will be available from the Tourist Information Centre and Library in August, will include new venues and activities and list the buildings that can be visited with their opening times. A pdf version has been e-mailed to members. Details of the event are also on www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Visit to Lamb House, Chapel Hill on September 13th

Paul Benjamin, the owner of Lamb House, will be again opening his home as part of English Heritage Open Days in September, so that the remarkable Chinese panelling there can be seen. This year he has offered to make available to Friends of Lewes members up to three slots for small groups, at 10am, 11am and 2pm.

This will give much more time to look at the screens, including the back of the screens that are normally unavailable for viewing. Part of the historical interest lies in the connection with Thomas Baldy, the Lewes entrepreneur, who sold Chinese goods in the 18th century, and who owned Lamb House, and with the James Lamberts, the Lewes artists who had close connections with the Baldy family and who inherited the house in the 1790s. The screens were covered up for 200 years which is why the colours are so wonderful.

Group size is restricted by the limited size of the space available for viewing so there will be a maximum of 8 persons per group. If you are interested, please reply as soon as possible to enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk

Meetings in the Lecture Room of the Town Hall that start promptly at 7.45pm

Thursday 26 September – Autumn General Meeting (see separate notice)

Thursday, 17 October – Time for Trees: a Lewes Arboretum – David Saunders. (Lecture at 7.45, but Lecture Room will be open from 7pm, to allow for viewing and judging of the photography competition)

Thursday, 14 November – Lewes Bonfire – Dr Jim Etherington

Lewes History Group meetings in the Kings Church building, Brooks Road starting at 7.30pm

Monday 9 September – Unearthing Roman History – new discoveries in the Ringmer area

Monday 14 October – Chapel Hill – street story

Monday 11 November – Lewes and the Railway

Members' e-mail addresses

It makes good use of our resources and improves the speed of our communications with members if the Society has as large a list as possible of e-contacts. Currently, less than half of our membership has an e-mail address listed with Friends of Lewes. If you think you are one of those who has not yet passed this information on, please do so now: Please send them to enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk