

# Friends of Lewes

the Lewes Civic Society



## Summer 2014 Newsletter

### North Street Quarter

Following the public exhibition earlier this year the developers, Santon, have made a number of changes to their plans in the light of comments received. Apart from a medical centre opposite Waitrose, flood defences, a footbridge across the river and some community facilities, the majority of the site will be used for housing, of which some 35% will be affordable. They have been holding pre-application discussions with the National Park Authority and their current intention is to submit a formal planning application this autumn. The Society has also been discussing tree cover in the proposed development with Santon to seek increased provision over the initial proposals. Meanwhile a group called



Phoenix Rising has been established who are particularly interested in retaining the old



ironworks buildings currently used by a number of small firms and they would also like to provide more affordable housing. The Society has adopted a neutral position on their proposals but, as they do not own any of the

site, recommended that they discuss them with Santon to see if further amendments could be made to Santon's plans to accommodate their thinking.

### Former Magistrates' Court

Having considered the revised planning application submitted by Quora to demolish the Magistrates Court and replace it with a Premier Inn and retail provision on the ground floor, the Society has objected to it largely on the grounds that the drawings provided are insufficiently detailed for such a major site in the centre of the town and that the car parking provision is inadequate. However the Society has re-confirmed that it has no objection to the proposed use but that before demolition of the Court is agreed a building that is superior in design should be proposed. It did, however, recognise that the revised plans have taken on board some earlier points made by the Society such as the new proposal not being so close to Fitzroy House and having a pitched rather than flat roof. The revised application is likely to be considered by the National Park Authority's Planning Committee shortly

Recently a planning application to use the existing building on a temporary basis for theatrical activities has been made. The Society is currently considering this.

### Tesco

The Society objected to Tesco's proposal to have a shoe repair pod in their car park and was pleased when this planning application was refused. The objection was because of concern at the continuing reduction in the

number of car parking spaces at the store, firstly by the establishment of a car wash facility and shortly by a click and collect.



The Society has approached Tesco for details of their future plans for the site but has not received a substantive reply.

### **Dripping Pan**

The Society met the promoter of the Dripping Pan development to express concern at the high green mesh fence proposed from the club house to the new artificial 3G pitch as it was felt that it would be visually intrusive. The club agreed to change the design and submitted an amended planning application for a knee-high single wooden rail, which the Society was able to support and this forms part of the scheme approved.

### **Lewes House Grounds**

Despite accepting that the housing proposed for this site is a sensible use of the land in question the Society objected to the design proposed in this latest planning application as there was insufficient information to determine what materials would be used and how the development would look from either Friars Walk or Chapel Hill. However, the District Council's Planning Committee, did not regard the scheme to be substantially different from the earlier one that had been approved and so this application was also approved.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

The Society is one of many local groups represented at the monthly meetings of the Steering Group of Lewes Neighbourhood Plan. When this Plan is completed it will set out the vision, aims, policies and proposals

for future development of the town. It can only be adopted following independent examination and a 50% 'yes' vote in a public referendum. The Plan then forms part of the statutory development framework for the area and has to be taken into account when making planning decisions. You can also find out more by visiting the Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page, "Lewes for All".

### **Southover Grange and the Maltings**

The swap of ownership between the County and District Councils over these two buildings has been finalised and so the County Council now own Southover Grange building, but not the gardens which remain with the District



Council, and the District Council own the Maltings. Newspaper reports indicate that the County Council intend using Southover Grange as an improved centre for their registration service and to make it available for weddings and other functions, and the Society will be discussing with them the details. As for the Maltings, the Society suggested that in view of its location it should be converted into an interpretation centre but it is understood that it is being let to a commercial concern.

## Cycle stands

The County Council was awarded a grant from the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund which has to be spent by April 2015 and one of the eligible projects is more cycle stands in Lewes town centre. The Society has no objection to an increased provision, although it has questioned whether the need has been based on hard evidence. It is concerned that the intention is to provide basic stands rather than replicate the heritage style stands that exist at present and which are more appropriate in the conservation area.



## Trees

A meeting has been held with District Council and National Park Authority staff about future plans and ideas, including the creation of educational and tourism interpretive material such as walking guides. Remedial work, agreed with the District Council, has been undertaken on the birch tree planted in the Bell Lane recreation ground in memory of Elisabeth Howard. The tree had suffered some damage, and what had originally been a multi-stemmed specimen is now a standard. In collaboration with Sussex Wildlife Trust, 5 trees have been planted in the grounds of Southover Primary School, to form a visual shield between the playing fields and car park. A further planting in the grounds, to replace the landmark beech on the corner of Grange Road that was felled a few years ago because of decay, is planned for this autumn.

Huw Morris led another evening walk around Malling Deanery arboretum, repeating last

year's success. Thanks are extended to Janet and Michael Richards, our hosts for the evening. The iTree survey of Lewes has now started, with the bulk happening in the first half of September. This survey will yield substantial data on the biomass, age, species and health of the town's tree population, along with ecosystems services values, such as carbon sequestration, pollution removal and water retention. If your home is visited as part of the survey (which covers 225 randomly placed 22 metre diameter circles across the town), please give it your support.

## Pavements

The Society remains very concerned at the amount of black top used for pavement repairs in the Conservation Area rather than using materials which would match those previously there. Whilst it is accepted that utilities need to dig up pavements from time to time and sometimes other faults causing a safety hazard can arise in a pavement surface, the use of black top should be a temporary measure and the original surface replaced as quickly as possible. Members are encouraged to let the Society know about black top used on pavements in the conservation area so that the County Council can be reminded about the need for proper replacement.

## Heritage Open Days

A reminder that national Heritage Open Days event runs from 11-14<sup>th</sup> September this year, and a team from the Society has again organised a programme for the town. You can pick up a leaflet from the Tourist Information Centre, the Town Hall, the library, and other outlets across the town, or you can go to [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk), and search under 'Lewes'. Some of the other activities taking place in the town on that weekend are also included in the leaflet.

Even if you have participated in the town's Heritage Open Days weekends before, a third of this year's properties to visit are NEW, and, of course, all the events are FREE. *Please note that a few of the events require advance booking, and these usually fill up quickly.*

Do take a look at this year's programme, and let the Society know if you have ideas for future years.

The event wouldn't happen without the combination of the co-operation of the building owners, finance from sponsors, and a team of volunteers. The Society is encouraged by the enthusiasm shown by those participating; both local people and those who come to the town from across the UK and abroad: last year over 2500 visits were recorded

## **Competitions**

### Children's Trees Competition

To raise awareness of the Society's "Urban Arboretum" project among the young people of Lewes, all primary-aged pupils at Lewes schools were invited during the Summer term to use Art work and writing to explain: "Trees are important to Lewes because..." As new trees are planted around our town the aim is for the children to learn about and value them, so they will be looked after as both the children and the trees grow to maturity. The winner will be announced in September. The prizes are a £10 Book Token for the winning pupil and a £50 book token and ten trees for the winning school. The trees are donated by members the Society's Trees Committee. Each of the participating Lewes Schools have been given free Associate Membership of the Society and links have been set up to engage them in future projects. Links from the Society's website to the Lewes Urban Arboretum Facebook page show all of the children's entries, which include prints, collage, drawings, paintings, poems and scientific facts.

<https://www.facebook.com/LewesUrbanArboretum> They are well worth a look!

### Summer 2014 Family Quiz: the Plaques in Lewes

There are many historical plaques dotted around Lewes. The Society has taken an active part in working with the Town Council to provide more to mark the links between local buildings and places and famous people or events in our history.

<http://friends-of-lewes.org.uk/2014/02/04/historical-plaques-in-lewes-a-comprehensive-survey-2/>

This year's Family Quiz involves walking around Lewes to find nine of these plaques, writing down the words missing from the photographs of plaques shown on the quiz sheet, and then matching these with the correct photograph of the place or building where each plaque can be found.

The closing date is September 6<sup>th</sup> 2014 and quiz sheets and further details are available from the Society's website. The first prize is £50 of W.H. Smith vouchers.

## **Events**

The Society had a stall in the pedestrian precinct on June 28<sup>th</sup>, which provided the opportunity to meet a lot of people and talk about their views of the town.

Harveys Brewery Tour: Around 30 members and guests took part in this private tour on the evening of July 11th, kindly arranged by Miles Jenner. Fascinating and tasty, it was much appreciated.

Visit of the Guildford Society: A group of more than 30 came for the day on July 15<sup>th</sup> and toured the town and Priory in three groups. There were many positive comments and the chance to discuss issues of mutual concern was valued. A visit is planned to take place next year.

Rye Conservation Society will visit Lewes on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

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## 2014 AUTUMN GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Autumn General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014

This will, extraordinarily, be in the **Council Chamber** of the Town Hall, Lewes at 7.45pm.

*Please note the change of venue and that this meeting is for members only.*

The agenda will be:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To consider other matters on which prior written notice has been given.
3. "My perceptions of Lewes as a historic town in East Sussex " A talk by Rupert Clubb, Director of Communities, Economy & Transport for East Sussex County Council.



There will be an interval for wine and juice and also be a table with Society items for sale.

Marcus Taylor    Hon. Secretary

**PTO for more diary dates**



## Dates for your diary

The Society's Autumn General Meeting takes place at 7.45pm on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October and, unusually, will be in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall. The speaker will be Rupert Clubb, Director of Communities, Economy & Transport at East Sussex County Council.

The Autumn & Winter lecture series starts on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October, when Mat Homewood will be talking about the history of Public Houses in Lewes.

On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November, Jon Gunson will draw on his "Friday Knights" series in the Sussex Express and reflect on a year of celebration with a talk entitled "The Knights of 1264: Rebels, Royalists and Rogues".

All these talks are in the Lecture Room at the Town Hall, starting at 7.45, with an interval with drinks available. Ideas for future talks are welcome and should be addressed to the Secretary.

Lewes History Group have talks at Kings Church, Brooks Road, starting at 7.30pm on the following dates and subjects. There is a small charge for attending these talks.

Monday 8 September – Dripping yarns – the story of a Lewes sporting icon.

Monday 13 October – Secrets of places & people in Lewes

Monday 10 November – The Social impact of the Great War – Never such innocence again.