



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

North Street Quarter

We gave a guarded approval to the plans put forward by Santon and the District Council to redevelop the North Street Quarter. We considered that this substantial project would deliver long term economic and social benefits to the town as well as re-generating and enhancing what is currently a run-down area. Nevertheless we recognised that it has been a breeding ground for new businesses in recent years, partly because space has been available at very low rents, but considered that as the proposals include a similar amount of commercial space it should be possible for existing businesses to relocate if they want and are able to. We also considered whether the remaining ironworks buildings were worth saving as a feature of the town's former industrial heritage but decided that as they were only a small part of the original complex, we favoured demolishing them so that the new street pattern proposed could be implemented. In this respect we noted that Heritage England did not consider the buildings were worthy of listing.

We support a Design Code and accept that many of the detailed design issues will be decided in due course after discussion in a Liaison Working Group at which we have asked to be represented. We have already signalled our strong interest in the structural methodology, materials and landscaping issues as well as detailed design. We have also supported the proposal for civic buildings, including a health centre, to be sited alongside Phoenix Causeway and for a landmark feature on the site, although we did not like the design proposed for a tall chimney.

The provision of over 400 residential units will go a long way towards meeting the need for new housing in Lewes and although some 40% of these will be what is described as affordable, we would like to see some provided at truly social rents whilst we also considered that the ratio of 1 and 2 bedroom units could be

increased as that is the type of accommodation in greatest demand in the town at present.

Although flood defences planned for the site will extend to protect the Pells area we have expressed concern that the complete flood protection scheme will not be completed for some years and so there is a need to mitigate the risk of flooding during the construction phase. In conjunction with the proposed flood protection we have welcomed the provision of a riverside walkway which will eventually run from Cliffe Bridge to Willey's Bridge on the west side of the river.

The proposed traffic and parking arrangements were welcomed and in particular the provision of a new access to the site from Phoenix Causeway leading almost immediately into a public car park. The emphasis on pedestrian access to and from the existing town centre was also supported as was the provision of a performance space for which further details as to what is proposed and how it will be managed are awaited.

Our full response to this planning application can be seen on our website. If a separate planning application to develop the site is submitted by another party it will be given similarly comprehensive consideration.

South Downs Road

A new planning application to develop this site and construct some 70 housing units together with some commercial office space was made recently. Whilst we support the use of this brown field site for housing and the provision of one and two bedroom housing units, some of which will be affordable, we objected to the proposal on design grounds. Although some aspects of the design were better than the previous scheme, which was rejected after an appeal, we opposed the provision of flat roofs, asymmetrical dormers and the proposed

FRIENDS OF LEWES

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PRESIDENT: Baroness Kay Andrews of Southover OBE Registered Charity No. 258756

removal of the poplar trees in Blake's Walk. Bearing in mind that the site is highly visible from the river as well as Cliffe Hill, we did not consider that the design of the proposal as a whole fitted comfortably into this part of the town which was the main reason why the Planning Inspector rejected the previous scheme.

Former Magistrates Court

We are represented on a Liaison Group which considers with local residents, developer and contractor, aspects relating to the demolition and construction work. It is anticipated that planning conditions relating to this will be discharged shortly to enable work to start on site in June. It is then envisaged that 3 weeks will be needed for non-structural work followed by 6 weeks for demolition. The construction phase should last 40 weeks so that in total the new building should be finished in about a year's time. The existing perimeter wall will be retained as long as possible and no activity will take place outside this wall, including loading of demolition materials. The site will also be hoarded to a height of about 8 feet and a rubber curtain will be provided alongside Friars Walk to reduce noise and dust. The existing trees will be protected although they may be pruned first. Medium sized lorries will be used to take away demolition materials via School Hill and Market Street and it is anticipated that there will be no more than 18 loads per week. Sample panels of materials to be used will be provided in due course and it has been suggested that the hoarding could be used to give a history of the site.

District Council/National Park Authority Core Strategy

We were represented at the Public Inquiry considering this Core Strategy, which was largely concerned with the future provision of housing in Lewes District. Subsequently the Inspector issued a report which found the draft plan generally sound but suggested a number of amendments to it. The District Council and the National Park Authority now have to decide whether to include all or some of these amendments in a further draft and public consultation on this will take place in the summer. Following representations at the Inquiry by developers the Inspector intimated that the fields at Old Malling Farm should be considered for future housing as the traffic from them would not exacerbate the existing congestion at Earwig Corner. Since then the Inspector has visited Old Malling Farm and a number of places from which the fields can be easily seen, such as Offham Hill and Hamsey Church, to familiarise

himself with the area. As these are green fields and the site is highly visible from many locations we will be opposing on landscape grounds any proposal to zone them for housing.

Neighbourhood Plan

The process for drafting a Neighbourhood Plan for Lewes is moving forward and the Town Council have appointed consultants (Feria Urbanism) to assist in this task. They are proposing to hold a Visioning Event on Thursday 4 June from 4pm to 7pm and a three day session from Tuesday 30 June to Thursday 2 July which will be producing the basis of a draft for public consultation. Whilst it is not clear whether we will be invited to these events it will certainly carefully consider any draft plan on which there is public consultation and members are encouraged to let us have their views on it when it is published.

20mph in Malling



We were concerned about the measures for reducing speed in Old Malling Way which were included in the proposal to introduce a 20mph speed limit in Malling. Whilst we agreed with the overall concept of a speed limit we opposed the introduction of 8 speed cushions in this road and suggested that a lower number coupled with other measures could be taken to achieve the same result. However it appears that the relevant County Council committee could only approve or reject the proposal before them rather than amend it, and after discussion the proposal was rejected. It is not known whether the County Council will be revising their plans to introduce a 20mph speed limit that it is more acceptable.

Trees

Since the annual report, the Trees Committee have planted four trees on the Malling Industrial Estate in South Downs Road, and one at Southover School, on

the corner of Grange Road and Southover High Street. This latter is a London Plane, intended to grow on in succession to the magnificent specimen near the school gate. All five are thriving so far, and coming into leaf well.



The Committee is also in discussion with the County Council and local residents about planting in a triangle of grass at the top of Middle Way on the Nevill Estate, and are developing plans for street tree replacements in the Wallands area.

The Lewes Urban Arboretum Facebook page is developing a dedicated group of followers. The data for the iTree survey, collected late last summer, will be entered for analysis as soon as a UK version of the system, which is developed and provided by the US Forestry Service, is implemented. This will give almost immediate turn-round, and will have all relevant UK data, such as rainfall, temperatures and pollution indexes, already available.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Communication in hard copy: Despite the rising cost, we will continue to send out printed copies of its routine communications to those members for whom we do not have e-mail addresses. In future e-mail will be the routine method of communicating with members, unless a specific request has been made for a printed copy by sending a note to Marcus Taylor at the Town Hall.

Children's Art Competition, Summer 2015: "A Special Place in Lewes"

We are inviting all of the children and young people living, or at school, in Lewes, to take part in their Summer 2015 Art Competition. We are asking them to draw, paint, or to make a print or a collage, of a building or place in Lewes which they think is special. The closing date is 11th September and full details can be found on our website: www.friends-of-lewes.org.uk.

As well as prizes for themselves and their school, winners will take part in a presentation on October 1st and the best designs will feature in our calendar for 2016, which, like our Christmas cards, will be available in the late autumn.

Our Events sub-committee has decided on a name change to reflect more accurately the range of its focus and duties. It is now the Membership Services Committee, with a brief that covers encouraging and retaining membership, visits and the winter and spring series of talks and presentations.

A visit to Guildford for FoL members: Last year the Guildford Society paid a day-long visit to Lewes and now we have the chance to spend a day being shown around Guildford, which has some similar issues to Lewes as well as differences. Travel will be probably be by train (via Gatwick) or by personal cars, meeting at Guildford railway station at 10.45. Lunch is being arranged at a cost to be advised for those taking part, which gives the chance to chat informally and share experiences. **The date for this will be Thursday, July 23rd.** If you are interested, contact Marcus Taylor.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Lewes History Group: The only publicised meeting in the period before the next newsletter is Dr Graham Mayhew on June 8th, who will be describing [A Day, a Year, a Lifetime for a Monk at Lewes Priory](#).

Lewes Speakers Festival: from July 17th to 19th.
A chance to hear, among many others, Louis de Bernieres, Dennis Skinner, AC Grayling....
Check out www.lewesspeakersfestival.com

Heritage Open Days - 10th to 13th September

A Society team is in the process of putting together the programme for this year's Heritage Open Days in the town. Look out for the leaflet in the Tourist Information Centre and other venues from mid-July as well as on line at www.heritageopendays.org.uk. All the events are free but some, which fill up quickly, will require booking in advance. If you are interested in volunteering as a steward at one of the venues please e-mail leweshod@gmail.com

Our Autumn General Meeting is on Thursday October 1st at 7.45pm in the Lecture Room at the Town Hall. A presentation by the winners of the children's art competition will be followed by a talk by one of the Deputy Lords Lieutenants for East Sussex about their role and duties.