



NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2015

Old Malling Farm

Friends of Lewes and the South Downs Society are joining forces to fight a proposal to build 200 new homes on a greenfield site in the heart of the Ouse Valley between Landport and Malling. The independent planning inspector, who conducted a public inquiry in January into the latest stage of the draft core strategy covering the whole of Lewes District, including the National Park, concluded that the draft would yield insufficient new dwellings to meet local need. He suggested that land at Old Malling Farm in Lewes could be developed to provide more houses, despite this being a site that had already been considered and rejected by the National Park Authority.

The designation of the National Park, and the decision to include the town of Lewes within it, was to ensure the protection of our precious landscape, the downland setting of Lewes and its cultural heritage. All of these are seriously threatened by the proposal to build 200 houses on two fields of quality farmland at Old Malling Farm, which are highly visible from many locations around Lewes as well as having historic associations and archaeological significance.

Although both Societies want to see more affordable housing available in and around the town on brownfield sites this proposed development would be a precedent for building on other greenfield sites on its edge.

A further round of consultation is taking place, with a possible reopening of the public inquiry in the autumn to consider objections made to this proposal. While the Societies will be putting forward a strong objection it is vital that others should also do so. If you share our view, please write to the Planning Department, LDC, Southover House, Lewes. BN7 1AB, before September 30.

National Park Local Plan

A consultation will be taking place in September on the National Park Authority's own Local Plan. When it is eventually adopted it will take the place of all existing Local Plans in the National Park including the draft Joint Core Strategy for Lewes District mentioned in the previous paragraph. It will, however, provide a consistent policy against which all planning applications in the National Park, whether dealt with by the National Park Authority or local Councils, are determined. It will contain various policies concerning Lewes, including a proposal to build 200 houses at Old Malling Farm, although the National Park Authority accept that this may need to be amended in light of the decision taken on the amendments to the Joint Core Strategy. FoL will be carefully considering the draft Local Plan and making appropriate representations about it and in doing so would be interested to have any comments members may have on it.

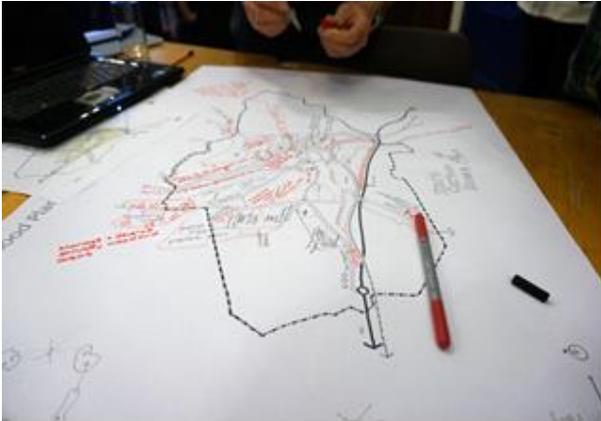
FRIENDS OF LEWES

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

Lewes Neighbourhood Plan

FoL was represented throughout the recent three-day event considering what should feature in the town's Neighbourhood Plan.



This plan, once it has been agreed by the Planning Inspectorate and approved by a majority in a town referendum, must be consistent with the National Park Local Plan. Essentially it goes into greater detail about local infrastructure and planning issues. A draft Neighbourhood Plan will be produced by the consultants appointed by the Town Council and FoL will consider it once it is available. We will support the ecosystem approach and the building of our "Town in the Trees" concept into the plan, including more street trees.

North Street Quarter

The planning application submitted by Santon and the District Council has not yet been determined by the National Park Authority because minor amendments to the plans are to be submitted and need to be made available to the public for consultation. It is understood that these will largely concern the proposed health centre. FoL will comment on them in due course and a copy of the comments will be posted on our website.

South Downs Road

This planning application for some 70 housing units, to which FoL made an objection on design grounds, is about to be

determined by the National Park Authority. It has also lobbied regarding the threat to the avenue of poplars along Blake's Walk. Despite these trees being on County Council land and not part of the site, the developers wish to fell some or all of them.

District Council sites

The District Council have published a list of sites that they own on which they believe it may be possible to erect housing in partnership with a developer. Whilst FoL is not opposed to the concept of land that is surplus to the District Council's operational requirement being used in this way, providing the design is good, it has expressed concern about a number of the sites proposed in Lewes:

One of the sites put forward is currently the site of the household waste facility in Ham Lane run by the County Council, but no information has been made available as to where this might be relocated. Another site is the former isolation hospital in Christie Road, currently used by St Mary's Social Centre, where it might be possible to provide an enhanced facility for the Social Centre as well as some affordable housing. At the public toilets in Western Road, might a toilet facility be provided as well as affordable housing? Another site that concerned us was Jubilee Green in Juggs Road where there is an underground reservoir and it is possibly of archaeological significance.

Other major developments

FoL is in touch with Waitrose, Subud (regarding the former St Anne's School site) and Ash Mill (regarding the Lewes House garden site) about the developments they propose but there is nothing to report at present. It will also be in contact with the purchaser of the Springman House site.

A watchful eye is being kept on the re-development of the former Magistrates Court site: photographs of the sample panels of materials to be used can be found on FoL's website. FoL has recently received some

inaccurate criticism in the local media - for example the Conservation Area Advisory Group is a separate body from FoL, although it has a representative on it.

Dormer windows and Garden rooms

FoL has recently produced guidelines on these two topics and uses them in considering relevant planning applications. Copies of the guidelines are available on our website.

Trees

FoL's Trees Committee is working with local residents to plant trees this autumn in the verges at the bottom of Valence Road and at the top of Middle Way on the Nevill Estate, where it meets North Way and South Way.

Chalk Pit Inn

In conjunction with the National Park Authority an interpretation board has been erected opposite the entrance to the Chalk Pit Inn which explains the significance of the now disused tunnels under the Offham Road at this point. The tunnels had been listed last year as a result of an initiative started by the late Paul Millmore and this is mentioned on the board.

Watergate Lane horse trough

As one of the bollards protecting this horse trough had disappeared FoL, in conjunction with the District Council, has provided a replacement.

Eastgate flower-bed

The District Council has agreed to the FoL logo being prominently displayed at this flower-bed in return for making a contribution towards its upkeep.

Grange Gardens fencing

Safety fencing has been required alongside the Winterbourne stream by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. FoL has been involved in lengthy discussions to

ensure this is as unobtrusive as possible. The work has just been completed

Heritage Open Days 10-13th September

Just to remind members that, for the fourth year, Friends of Lewes is organising the popular Lewes Heritage Open Days, and has produced a leaflet containing venues and events over the weekend. Again, a third of the programme is new, including a modernist house, a former mill and a local prison. There are also tours - of the Malling arboretum, Harveys' brewery, the Maltings and a 'Priory Trail' walk.



Members may also like to take their friends and visitors to regular favourites, such as Tom Paine's Bull House, the Jireh chapel, the Freemason's Hall, Undercliffe House and the harpsichord workshop in Market Street.



The churches involved - St Anne's, St. John-sub-Castro and St Michael's - are all putting on special events over that weekend. The

Priory Trust is repeating its very successful candlelit event on the evening of Saturday 12th Sept., and, during that afternoon, the related Gundrada Chapel in Southover Church will be open.

It's all free, but some events require booking in advance - and places can fill up quickly. For all the details, pick up our leaflet from the tourist office, Town Hall or library, or go online to heritageopendays.co.uk

If you would like to volunteer as a steward over the HOD Weekend, which would also bring an invitation to our launch reception, then contact Judith Davies, on 01273 477447 or email jdavies@gables2.fsnet.co.uk

LEWES IN STORM AND FLOOD.

Contributors wanted

The Membership Services Committee has decided that the talk in January next, rather than a conventional 'lecture', will be a collection of personal experiences of the ways in which Lewes and Lewesians have been affected by extreme weather, focussing particularly on the great storm of October 1987 and the numerous river floods. There must be many fascinating stories and anecdotes out there, as yet unshared.... I hope this will be a talk with many voices.

Would you be willing to contribute, either by sharing a brief anecdote on the night in person, by being interviewed or writing a short piece that could be read out? If so, please contact Marcus Taylor on marcusstaylor@btopenworld.com or ring him on 01273 473098.

FoL Summer Competition for children.

In the long weeks of the summer holiday, if you know of any bored children, desperate parents or grandparents short of an idea, please direct them to our website, which has all the details: it is the top news item on the home page.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Autumn General Meeting – 1st October – Lecture Room, Town Hall. – see attached agenda.

FoL Autumn Lectures – in the Lecture Room at the Town Hall at 7.45pm

Thursday 29th October – The Genesis of Lewes Little Theatre - Paul Myles.

Thursday 26th November – The role of the Trees & Landscape Officer – Daniel Wynn

Also 20th January and 17th February. 2016

Also of possible interest:

LEWES HISTORY GROUP MEETINGS:

Monday 14 September Stephanie Smith
The Portable Antiquities Scheme in the Lewes area

Monday 12 October Mat Homewood
Sports and Pastimes in Old Lewes: from the Amazing to the Bizarre

Monday 9 November Simon Stevens
Old Walls, Wellies and Wasps – Recent Archaeological Work at Lewes Priory