



NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2017

Draft South Downs Local Plan

Consultation is currently taking place on the draft Local Plan which, when adopted, will replace the existing District Council/National Park Authority Joint Core Strategy. In general terms the Society welcomes the draft as it is based on a landscape led basis and will, when adopted, provide consistency in planning policy across the National Park.

The only major concern the Society has on the draft Plan is that it proposes to allocate the arable fields at Old Malling Farm for housing.



Although there was a public inquiry into this proposal when the Joint Core Strategy was being considered and the Inspector decided in favour of allowing the proposal, as it would assist the District Council in meeting its housing target, the Society considers that a fresh look should be made at it in light of the draft Plan having a landscape led approach. In that connection the Old Malling Farm site is very visible, was outside the existing settlement boundary and would

result in good agricultural land being turned over to housing. Some of the housing that was planned for the Old Malling Farm site could no doubt be accommodated on brown field sites within the town proposed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

It would be helpful if members concerned about this matter could express their views to the National Park Authority by the closing date of 21 November. These can be made on line to planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk, by letter to Planning Policy, South Downs National Park Authority, North Street, Midhurst, GU29 9DH or by completing a representation form available by downloading from their website:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/localplan>

In all cases please quote the policy number SD 79 in your communication.

Draft Lewes Neighbourhood plan

The representations made following the public consultation in the summer are currently being considered and, where appropriate, amendments are being made to the draft Plan. This will then be submitted by the Town Council to the National Park Authority who will undertake a further consultation before the Plan is considered by an examiner appointed by the Planning Inspectorate. Subject to any further amendments the draft plan will then be put to a town referendum.

FRIENDS OF LEWES

c/o Lewes Town Council Offices, Town Hall, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2QS
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PRESIDENT: Baroness Kay Andrews of Southover OBE Registered Charity No. 258756

The Society is anxious to ensure that the submitted plan is one which takes on board its previous comments and is one with which it can be comfortable. In the event that it considers that significant amendments are still required, members will be made aware of this so that they can support the Society in the consultation.

Major Developments

Work is continuing on the provision of new industrial units on Malling Brooks and when it is finished some of the businesses currently operating in North Street will be able to move there so that demolition of that part of the North Street Quarter site between Phoenix Causeway and North Street can begin. Once this has taken place an entrance to the site will be created from Phoenix Causeway so that building work traffic does not have to use existing roads in the conservation area.

The South Downs Road site has now received planning permission for 101 dwellings, but work on this site has still to start.

A planning application has been made to provide housing on the land behind Tesco where former commercial buildings were demolished some time ago. The Society objects to this proposal as it does not consider the site suitable for housing, being surrounded by other commercial units, and it would be far better used as a coach park for visiting tourist coaches.

The Society also strongly objects to the construction of dwellings on land behind the Prison as this is outside the settlement boundary, would be unsightly on landscape grounds and would involve a greenfield site being lost.

Rights of way near the former racecourse

The County Council have refused permission for the bridle path running from Spital Road to the former racecourse buildings to be moved. The District Council are considering whether to take enforcement action on the provision of a cinder track in the vicinity without planning permission to which it was hoped the bridleway could be diverted.

Wheelie bins

Whilst individuals can opt to retain their black boxes rather than switch to the new wheelie bins to be provided in the first half of next year, provided they actively communicate this wish to the District Council, concern has been expressed about the effect that keeping wheelie bins in the street in the conservation area would have on its ambience.

Transport matters

The Society expressed its concern to the County Council that the setts on Market Street were removed and replaced with tarmac without consultation. Prior to their introduction in 1992 the Society had supported the scheme and arranged for enhanced railings to be provided at the junction with West Street. Whilst there was clearly a need to do something about the subsidence and rutting that had occurred in Market Street, due to the setts not having a sufficiently firm base, the County Council carried out the change without consulting the National Park Authority or giving any consideration to its responsibilities towards conservation areas or the national park.

The Society understand that the County Council are undertaking a review of parking provision in Lewes District and that any proposed changes will be consulted on in December. The changes are likely to include a ban on pavement parking on the north side of the High Street and limiting the times during which vehicles can load or unload there and the creation of two new loading bays on the south side. If you agree with the changes put forward do respond to the County Council's consultation when it is made public. Separately the County Council are proposing to allow a limited amount of public parking at County Hall on a pay & display basis.

The County Council have told the Society that a pedestrian crossing near the Offham Road/Prince Edwards Road junction is likely to be constructed before the end of the current financial year.

Trees

This Autumn the Trees Committee, at the request of some of the residents, are exploring the verges of Houndean Rise and Southdown Avenue to find appropriate sites for planting new street trees. Once our surveys have been completed we will be consulting with the people who live near to the proposed plots: so that we can favour their choices of tree varieties from a 'menu' of trees which would be most suitable for the local conditions.

Earlier this year we were asked by the tree officer for the District Council to plant replacement trees at the top of Paddock Lane, where several Horse Chestnuts had been felled for Health and Safety reasons. This has proved to be a difficult area because of the slope, some heavy undergrowth, large tree stumps and the shade provided by the remaining trees. When we have found places where new trees might thrive we will be sharing ideas with nearby residents to decide together on the best way forward.



Leaves of Liquidambar showing autumn colour



Liquidambar, (sweet gum tree), Valence Road

We are continuing to visit all the trees which we have planted over the past seasons: in Valence Road, Abergavenny Road, at the top of Middle Way, and in South Downs Road. We are clearing any weeds from the base of each tree and then mulching around it, both to promote tree growth and to prevent any accidental strimmer damage.

Heritage Open Days 2017

Over 2,500 visits took place in September to the various venues and events organised by the Society's Heritage Open Days team for the annual weekend. As well as a popular local event, publicised through our printed leaflets and posters, visitors come from all over the country, and also from overseas, as the Lewes programme is listed on the national Heritage Open Days website website



This year, local people were especially pleased that Fitzroy House opened its doors, as well as the Police Headquarters at Malling House and Trinity House on School Hill. All the pre-booked events, including the guided walks, filled up before the Open Days weekend, with the *Eventbrite* online booking system, used by us for the first time, working effectively.

All our costs were covered by the District Council, Town Council, Adams & Remers, and Mackellar Schwerdt and the Society is very grateful to them for their sponsorship.

The weekend needs around 50 volunteers, including building owners, stewards and guides, to run: the small team that plans the whole thing starts meeting in February. If you would like to be

involved, either in the planning progress, as a building owner, or by stewarding over the weekend, then we would be pleased to hear from you. You can contact us on leweshod@gmail.com

The Heritage Open Days dates for 2018 are 13-16 September.

Peace Garden project

Consultations with relevant authorities concerning this proposed project are continuing.



They are more extensive than normal due to the historic nature of the site and include the need to undertake an investigatory archaeological dig in the Peace Garden area. The results of this will then be put to Historic England, whose consent is necessary for the project to proceed. Once this is obtained, planning permission and that of the District Council as the site owner will also be needed. No work will commence until the Society has secured the necessary funds and approaches on this will be made once it is reasonably certain that the various authorities have approved the project.

Dates for your diary

Thursday, November 23rd: An evening with Jim Franks' Camera. Photographs of Lewes 1969-99. 7.45pm in Southover Church.



Wednesday, January 17th: David Smith (Flintman) will talk about the town's ubiquitous building material. 7.45pm in the Lecture Room of the Town Hall.

[A talk by the Fire and Police chiefs for the county in mid-February has not yet got a confirmed date and will be advertised in the January Newsletter.]

Lewes History Group:

Monday, 11th December: Lewes History Group AGM & Street Stories updates. 7.30pm at King's Church, Brooks Road.