



KEEPING OUR TOWN SPECIAL

A PEACE GARDEN FOR LEWES.

In last January's edition of *Viva Lewes*, there was an article about the history of the area known to many as the Magic Circle, behind the bowling green in the castle precincts. A classical feature within the large gardens of Castlegate House, created in 1920, over time it came back into public use and for decades has been on the short-cut down the steps and back into Castle Ditch Lane. It became an overgrown and thus hidden area - the water feature was removed and vandalism damaged the parts of the original structures that remained. The article ended by accurately calling its present state one of 'scandalous disrepair'.

For some years the Friends of Lewes Society has been planning to do something about this area, believing it can be reinstated with a nod to its first purpose as a place to pause and reflect in pleasant surroundings. Rebuilding the classical stonework is not realistic, but it can still be a feature on a key tourist route from the castle precincts back to the High Street.

The bureaucratic processes of establishing a Right of Way and ownership took time but are now complete and it is time to share the plan and seek support.

The original circle will be repaved and the path improved; wooden seating of a robust nature will be provided, the shrubbery will be reduced and replanted and alongside, facing the car park, another area with a more open circular arrangement of seating will be created, with associated landscaping of the surrounding slopes.

It is planned to have this work completed by the centenary of the peace at the end of World War I and for the whole area to be known as a Peace Garden, echoing the title of the book by its creator Frank Frankfort Moore – *A Garden of Peace*.

At present informal consultations are taking place with the various authorities concerned with the site and an archaeological survey has been commissioned as a result of this. This should pave the way for a formal planning application to be made shortly. **Full details of the project will be available at the meeting in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall at 7.30pm on September 14th**, when a campaign will be launched to raise funds for the project to meet the difference between the cost and what the Town and District Councils and any grant-making trusts are likely to contribute.

This presentation is open to all who are interested and for those who would like to view the site first there is a chance to do so immediately beforehand at 7pm prompt.

Friends of Lewes, August 2017