

Friends of Lewes

the Lewes Civic Society



Spring 2012 Newsletter

Paul Millmore

As many of you will know Paul died on 18 March after a short illness. He had been a member of the Society's Executive Committee for almost eight years during which time he had made suggested many issues that the Society should engage in. Indeed until a week of his death he was still coming forward with ideas for projects which are covered below. His great love was the South Downs and he was a leading light in the South Downs Campaign and in particular the need to have Lewes included within the National Park boundary. He was also good at analysing policy documents issued by public authorities and his suggestions for the Lewes and Malling Deanery conservation areas are still being considered. He will be a great loss to the Society and also the town because it was he



who was concerned about the fact that litter, including shopping trolleys in the river, gave the town a bad name.

North Street re-development

The Society's Executive Committee have had a

preliminary meeting with a representative of the Santon group who have acquired the land in North Street previously owned by Angel



Properties. No plans have yet been drawn up to redevelop the site but the emphasis will be on maintaining a pedestrian flow to the High Street, so that the site is not so isolated, and on respecting the history and vernacular architecture of the town. In the meantime Santon intend to manage the estate more efficiently.

Conservation Areas

The formal consultation about extending the Lewes conservation area to include the cemetery and the former St Anne's school site has now finished and it will be for the National Park Authority to consider any points raised in this consultation before deciding whether to confirm the extension. The Society has indicated that it strongly supports the proposal, which was first made some 5 years ago in the appraisal of the conservation area commissioned by the District Council.

Separately we are still awaiting the appraisal undertaken into the Malling Deanery conservation area as well as a Management Plan for both it and the Lewes conservation area.

Planning issues

As Lewes is within a National Park the effect which the Government's National Planning Policy Framework will have on it should be limited, but we await further details on this.

The Society objected to the planning application for a house on the site of the shed at the very end of South Street as it did not consider the proposal made a fitting 'gateway' to Lewes. Although it had been recommended for approval by the planning officers the District Council's Planning Applications Committee decided to refuse permission. It remains to be seen whether the applicant will appeal or submit a revised application.

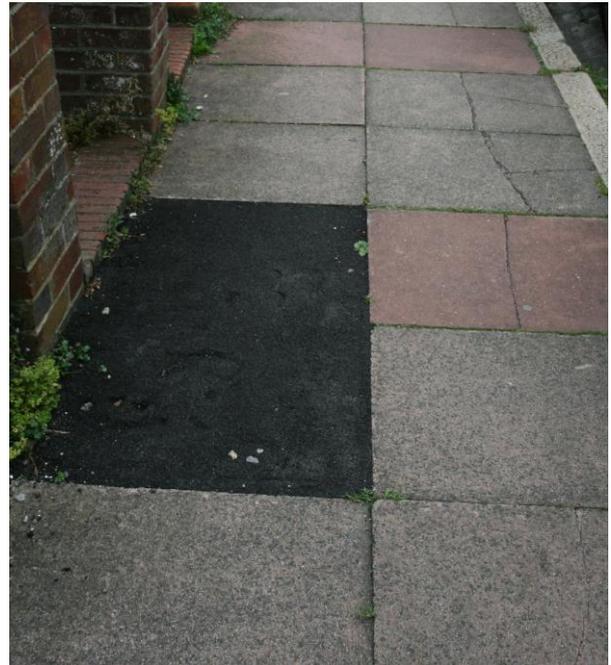
The Society has also objected to the building of two houses in the chalk pit at the very end of Mill Road on the principal grounds that this is outside the built up area of the town. This application has been called in for determination by the National Park Authority.

Whilst the Society has been pleased with the external work being done on the former Police Station it has not succeeded in its attempt to have single storey houses reinstated in Sun Street due to a change in planning legislation.

Highway issues

After much badgering the County Council erected a new conventional no entry sign at the Morris Road junction with Cliffe High Street, thus making it much clearer that the latter road was not available to westbound traffic other than bicycles.

The Society has taken up with the County Council the question of reinstatement of either the road or pavement after contractors have undertaken work. Whilst it is permitted for black top to be used as a temporary



reinstatement, the original surface should be reinstated once the back-fill has settled. Where this does not happen the County Council have asked the Society to give details and members should therefore either e-mail the Society or drop a note into the Town Hall with the location and approximate length of time since work took place that involved removing the original surface. Reports could also be made on cracked paving stones or other issues concerning roads or pavements.

Landport Bottom

The District Council has now considered the points made in its consultation about the use of Landport Bottom. Essentially it concluded that the various uses were all complementary but that people using the site needed to show greater respect for the different requirements



that each type of user has - including walkers, with or without dogs, cyclists and horse riders. They also said that the recreational activities were having less impact than first thought on the flora although they recognised erosion problems on the tracks and around gateways.

Projects

Plaques

Later this year, in collaboration with Lewes Town Council, six more plaques will be erected on relevant buildings. Details of them are as follows :-

- **Almshouses on Keere Street:**
Thomas Matthew, a Presbyterian woollen draper in the High Street, bequeathed his house on this site for the benefit of the poor of the parish of St. Michael-in-Lewes in 1688. The Almshouses were closed in 1960.
- **Garden Street, on the east side, north of the Winterbourne stream**
Here blossomed a Physic Garden for medicinal herbs tended by Cluniac monks from Southover Priory. Hereabouts, too, the Winterbourne stream powered their eastern watermill.

- **Garden Street, on the wall of the Grange Gardens, south of the Winterbourne stream**

Here, for 200 years, stood a Grammar School founded in 1512 by Widow Agnes Morley. Its pupils included John Evelyn, diarist, arboriculturist and founder member of the Royal Society, and Richard Russell whose sea-water cure launched Brighton as a resort.

- **Lewes Infirmary & Dispensary: 11, High Street**

Lewes Dispensary was established in 1847, funded by the Pest House charity and public subscription. It soon moved here, adding three accident beds in 1867 and the Victoria wards in 1888. The present hospital was opened in 1910.

- **Western Road, on railings around water reservoir, across from the Black Horse**

Here stood Snellings Mill, in which Richard, King of the Romans and brother of Henry III, sought refuge during the Battle of Lewes in 1264. "Richard, that thou be ever trichard, trichen shalt thou nevermore".

- **Greyfriars Gate.** The only surviving part of the Greyfriars Franciscan Friary once by the junction of Friars Walk and the High Street. Built in 1224, demolished as part of the Dissolution in 1538, then re-erected here in the middle of the 19th Century.

Trees

Some time ago the Society received a legacy for tree planting. The late Paul Millmore considered that we should first undertake a professional survey as to where trees might best be planted. He envisaged the Society obtaining a grant from the National Park Authority for this work but before applying he recognised that we needed to show community involvement. An article about this has therefore appeared in the April edition of Viva Lewes in conjunction with the town's apple pressing project inviting the public to make suggestions. When the results of this have been considered the application for a grant will be pursued.

Banners

This is also another project in which Paul Millmore was involved. Essentially it is to have heraldic banners in the High Street marking the 750th anniversary of the battle of Lewes in 2014 and in subsequent years. Much work needs to be done to establish how feasible this is given the need to involve property owners for permission to hang banners, quite apart from the cost of producing them.

Awards

Members are invited to make suggestions of buildings or other parts of the public realm where significant improvements have been made since the last time the Society gave awards in 2010. Please either e-mail the Society or drop a note into the Town Hall with your suggestions. If you know the builder or architect for a project that would be helpful.

Volunteers

Sussex Archaeological Society

In March the Society had a fascinating illustrated lecture by Emma O'Connor from the Sussex Archaeological Society about their archives. If you fancy assisting her as a volunteer with cataloguing images and photos please contact Emma at molewes@sussexpast.co.uk or drop a note to her at Bull House, Lewes.

Heritage Open Days

The Society is leading on this annual event in Lewes which this year will be on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 September. It is hoped to have more buildings open to the public and for this volunteers to man them are needed. If you could help for all or part of the time please contact Judith Davies on jdavies@gables2.fsnet.co.uk or ring her on 477447.

Dates for your diary

Sunday 24 June

All Saints Centre

The BBC are organising a "Great Lewes Story History Day" during which Kim Clark will give a talk on the twittens and street names of Lewes at 2pm.

Sunday 18 August

Newhaven Incinerator

Veolia are arranging an Open Day for members of the public. Full details should appear in the local press nearer the time..

Thursday 27 September

Autumn General Meeting.

Lecture Room, Town Hall 7.45pm

Further details of this and the next Lecture series will be given with the summer newsletter.