



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2018

Neighbourhood Plan

The draft submission Plan has now been approved by the Town Council and shortly the National Park Authority, as the planning authority for Lewes, will be arranging a formal consultation on it. The comments made in response to this consultation are then passed to the Planning Inspectorate which decides whether the Plan can be put to a referendum of the people of Lewes, either as it stands or with amendments. It is also possible that they can ask for the Plan to be re-submitted after changes are made to it.

The Society considers that the submission draft of the Plan is much improved on earlier drafts and in particular it welcomes the fact that the housing target set by the National Park Authority has been met by allocating many small brownfield sites, largely already in public ownership, for this. This allocation excludes both the North Street Quarter and Old Malling Farm as these are regarded as strategic sites outside the Plan. It also does not cover the allocation of land for industrial or commercial purposes, as this is a matter for the National Park Authority.

However the Society does have two main concerns. The first is that many of the aspirational aspects in it are made without adequate evidence being provided for their inclusion. The other is that it gives insufficient emphasis to the Conservation Areas and chooses to use a definition of the 'historic core' of the town, which is not a term that has any significance in planning legislation.

Shortly after the formal consultation has commenced the Society will put its response on its web-site so that members can use it as appropriate in their own responses.

North Street Quarter

The demolition of that part of the site between Phoenix Causeway and North Street is moving closer as the many pre-commencement planning conditions are expected to be shortly fulfilled. In addition the new premises for Gosnells on Malling Brooks should shortly be completed and once they and Wenban-Smith have moved this part of the North Street site will be clear of existing occupants and demolition can commence.

Springman House

Plans are currently being drawn up for the demolition of Springman House and for a new fire station to be provided on the site. A planning application will follow. The Society is concerned that the proposed development may reduce or even eliminate public car parking behind the police station, although the

FRIENDS OF LEWES

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

District Council has said that at least during the construction period it will provide a similar amount of public car parking at 20 – 24 North Street, where the existing buildings will be removed.

Land beside Tesco

The Society opposed the development of 41 dwellings, 4 of which would be affordable, on the site between Tesco and Homebase, as it considered the proportion of affordable housing at just over 9% to be well below the 40% currently required by the Lewes District Joint Core Strategy. However the National Park Authority’s Planning Committee approved the development as they regarded the dwellings as enabling some small industrial or commercial units to be provided within it. Using the site in this way will prevent part of it being used as a park for tourist coaches, which will be needed once the North Street development gets under way and for which, despite Lewes becoming a popular destination for tourist coaches, no alternative provision was specified in the planning permission approved for the North Street development.

Peace Garden

The Society is moving forward with its plans to renovate the unkempt area within the castle precincts formerly known as the Magic Circle, although these will have to be revised to bring the total cost to a level which the Society can afford and which are not disproportionate to the improvement that will result to the public realm. Even so, after contributions from the District and Town Councils, some fund-raising will be necessary to enable the project to proceed and so no contracts will be signed until funding is secured. If you would like to make a specific donation to this project, please send it to the Society at the Town Hall.

Projects



FoL has agreed to sponsor Litter-Free Lewes, by giving this new group £150 to identify their hi-vis jackets and acquire more equipment. Seek them out on Facebook and see how active they have been of late. *Photograph shows some of the group in Cockshut Lane in March*

The old wooden signpost on Southover High Street by the mini-roundabout at the Swan has been repaired and restored after a request by Friends of Lewes. Concerned that the last old-style wooden fingerboard in the town was in a very poor state of repair, and was not likely to get to the top of East Sussex Highways’ list of priorities, FoL sought the help of Steve Brigden, the Town Clerk, who arranged for Brian Courage, the Town Council’s Ranger, to restore it. It was in a bad way, but weeks of careful repair and re-decoration have worked wonders, as these “Before” & “After” photos show.



- Two new FoL/LTC plaques will go up soon, giving the history of the Maltings & Depot's Cinema building.
- A board providing additional information about the clay pipe kilns is ready to go up in Pipe Passage.

Parking Consultation

East Sussex Highways are currently consulting on a number of proposed changes regarding Lewes, most significant of which is the plan to ban pavement parking on the High Street from Westgate to Eastgate and create two new delivery bays. This should then enable much needed repairs to the footways.

The consultation is at https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/lewes-formal-201718/?mc_cid=e350107fc0&mc_eid=70b9f954fe FoL is responding positively to all these changes. The closing date for comments is May 25th and FoL members are encouraged to contribute.

Trees

On March 11th the Trees Committee were able to plant twelve new trees along Houndean Rise. Having found the best sites to avoid all the utilities and other services, the residents chose their preferred varieties from a list of those which we thought would do well on this chalky ground with narrow grass verges. The trees chosen were: upright varieties of Field Maple, (*Acer streetscape Elsrijk*); ornamental pears, (*Prunus calleryana Chanticleer*); white flowering cherries, (*Prunus padus Albertii*), a Judas tree, (*Cercis siliquastrum*), two Liquidambar styraciflua Worplesdon and two flowering cherries with pink-tinged blossom, (*Prunus Umeniko*).

They were planted as bare winter trees and it is lovely to see the new leaves and blossom starting to appear. We are very grateful to the residents of Houndean Rise who helped us: with the delivery and planting of the trees, by carting away the spoil and offering us refreshments. The residents who had a tree planted outside their home also agreed to keep an eye on the trees and water them over dry periods.

Photograph shows the blossoms of one of the Prunus Umeniko planted in Houndean Rise



One of our next projects is to choose and plant three trees in the green space in front of Mount Harry Stores, with the support of Nevill Residents' Association. We are also exploring the entrances to Lewes to help to choose the best sites for "Gateway Trees" to welcome residents and visitors to our special town. Meanwhile on St. Anne's Hill, Western Road, we are hoping to add at least two more elm trees to the three which have already been planted in collaboration with the County Council. Thanks to funding from the Chalk Hill Trust we were able to plant the third tree in early April. The Tesco "Bags of Help" scheme has awarded us at least £1,000 towards the two further trees: and we may receive even more, depending on the results of the blue tokens deposited by Tesco customers during March and April.

Heritage Open Days 6-9 September: A call for volunteers

Once again the Society is organising the popular Lewes Heritage Open Days weekend, with many old favourites in the programme, as well as some additional buildings and walks.

The event wouldn't happen without volunteers, and it takes around 50 people, not only to organise the programme, but to be around to guide and steward on the weekend. Those who have helped out in the past have found it the experience very rewarding, and have enjoyed talking to visitors. We supply you with briefing notes, and you also get an invitation to the formal Heritage Open Days launch. If you are interested in joining in, then please email leweshod@gmail.com , or contact 01273 477447

The programme will be published (in print and online) early in July, and some of the events have limited places and need booking in advance, so look out for the leaflet that will be distributed around the town, or access online via the Friends of Lewes web-site www.friends-of-lewes.org.uk or visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Vacancies

At present the Society urgently needs both a new Treasurer to replace Mike Stepney, who has already resigned, and Marietta Van Dyke, who wishes to resign after some 28 years as Membership Secretary. If you consider that you have the attributes and time for either of these voluntary posts, or can point us towards someone who may have, please contact either the Chairman or Secretary.

Data Protection Act changes

As you will no doubt be aware, a revised Data Protection Act will come into effect in May 2018. Although, as a non-profit organisation, the Society is exempt from formal compliance, the Executive Committee agreed some two years ago that it was appropriate and responsible for the Society to voluntarily comply with the current 1998 Act, so that we minimized the risk of accidental disclosure of personal data, and kept pace with society, practice and the general expectations of our members. We will continue this stance with the forthcoming changes, and we are in the process of amending our forms, procedures and Privacy Notice to comply with the additional and changed provisions in the new Act. As part of this work we will ensure during the 2019 membership renewal process that we request, capture and record your consent to our keeping your contact details, including for life members. As the Society is a membership organisation, you will appreciate that without your consent your membership would lapse.

Trip to Eastbourne

An invitation to FoL members has been extended by Rob Cottrill, CEO of Lewes & Eastbourne Councils and Chris Connelley, the Conservation Officer for both authorities, to visit the town and be shown features and projects of interest on the afternoon of Thursday, July 12th between 1pm and 4pm.

Please meet by 1pm in the reception area of Eastbourne Council main offices at 1 Grove Road (BN21 4TW). The afternoon is expected to include a short Town Hall tour, a town centre architectural walk, a preview of the new Devonshire Quarter development and tea and cake to finish.

Members are to make their own travel arrangements. There's a range of town centre public parking, including a sizeable site by the Devonshire Quarter, and the meeting place is close to the railway station. Please let Marcus Taylor know if you plan to be there – either through a message to Lewes Town Hall or via enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk

Friends of Lewes Talks 2018-19:

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| September 13 | <u>Saving Fitzroy House</u> – Eleanor Austin Southover Church |
| October 24 | <u>Women's Suffrage in Lewes</u> – Frances Stenlake Town Hall |
| January 17, 2019 | <u>"Lewes - looking back and looking forward"</u> – Norman Baker Town Hall |

Lewes History Group Meetings:

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| June 11 | Life of the Lewes Workhouse Building, 1868 – 1960. Mat Homewood |
| July 9 | What to see in a Sussex Church. Kevin Gordon |