



# NEWSLETTER

**SUMMER, 2019**

## The Garden of Peace



On June 12 the enhancements made to the Garden of Peace were formally opened by the Mayor of Lewes (Councillor John Lamb) whilst our President (John Davey) unveiled the information board erected in connection with the project. It had been our aspiration to improve what had for a long time been a run-down and neglected area.

The fact that we were eventually able to succeed was through the innovative thinking that Paul Myles applied to the project, the financial support that we received from the Town Council and, most importantly, the supervision of the actual work by Chris Bibb of the District Council, which will also be responsible for its future maintenance. If you have not done so already, do go and visit the garden which can be accessed either by the steps from Castle Ditch Lane or through the car park next to the Maltings building.

## South Downs Local Plan

The South Downs Local Plan was finally adopted at the June meeting of the South Downs National Park Authority. It has been a long time in the making but now provides a common set of planning policies across the whole of the National Park replacing *inter alia* the Joint Lewes District Plan and National Park Authority Core Strategy. The Society broadly welcomes having this single plan as it should prevent anomalies occurring within the National Park on proposals of a similar nature.

However it is disappointed that the Inspector considering the draft Plan retained the provision relating to housing at Old Mallings Farm, particularly when in the early years of the National Park Authority it had been opposed to development of this site, mainly on landscape grounds.

However before any development can take place the National Park Authority have to determine planning applications submitted for the site and this will entail them being satisfied that conditions imposed by the Inspector are met.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Whilst there are many good intentions in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan the Society considers that more priority needs to be given to some items. It has therefore drawn up such a prioritised list and is pursuing their execution with the appropriate authority responsible for each issue.

### **North Street Quarter**

An advertisement has recently appeared in the Estates Gazette for a developer to undertake the construction of the buildings on this site in accordance with the plans approved by the National Park Authority. It is hoped to choose a suitable developer in the autumn.

### **Historic England's High Street scheme**

Historic England wishes to assist in rejuvenating High Streets in conservation areas. The District Council and National Park Authority have made a bid for funding for a scheme in the part of the High Street between Westgate and Watergate Lane. The Society has indicated its support for such funding and we wait to see whether the bid is successful. If so, we would hope to be involved in the details of how any grant money is disbursed, bearing in mind that it may well only cover a proportion of the cost of an eligible project.

### **Other major projects**

Work has started on the new houses for which planning permission has been obtained on South Downs Road. Aldi appear to have deferred their plans to enlarge their store on Brooks Road, having just completed a "refresh" of the internal layout.

### **Parking**

The County Council are consulting about proposed increases in on-street parking charges in Lewes – for the first time in ten years. This will not affect the charges in the off-street car parks managed by the District Council which will remain at a lower rate to encourage motorists to use them rather than park on the street. In responding to the County Council the Society is asking to see a copy of the heritage statement that should have been prepared alongside the proposals. In particular the Society needs to be satisfied that the effect that increased charges could have on the footfall in adjacent shops has been taken into account, since lower footfall could lead to shops closing and the premises in question becoming disused and at risk of deterioration. If the charges are approved the Society is suggesting that the first 30 minutes should be free.

### **Rights of Way**

The Society has supported claims for a new right of way between the Brighton Road and Barons Down Road through the Clevedown estate and also for the diversion of a right of way near the old racecourse on to the route used by the public. It has noted that the appeal made against the refusal of planning permission for a new track in this area, which was constructed without permission, has been dismissed and will wait to see whether restoration of the land now takes place or whether enforcement action will be required.

### **Historic Plaques**

The Town Council have indicated that they are prepared to fund two further plaques in the current financial year whilst the Society has agreed to fund a further one. The recommendation made to the Town Council is that these plaques should be installed at Lewes House, a building in Fisher Street, (once District Council offices, with the plaster relief panels, designed by Lewes architect Rowland Hawke Halls in 1914) and on a house in Cliffe High Street once lived in by Grace Kimmins, who founded Chailey Heritage.

## **Reeves' Light Boxes**

The Society has agreed to make a grant of £ 1,000 towards equipment needed in connection with the previously very successful light box exhibitions.

## **Trees**

Over the summer months the focus of the Trees Committee is on planning for potential new plantings in the autumn. Thanks to the County Council processing the surveys of utilities at our potential sites, we are still pursuing the idea of planting "Gateway Trees" at the entrances to Lewes. However, our plans to plant Gateway Trees at the entrance to Cuilfail Tunnel, on the grassy patch at the bottom of South Street, and near Earwig Corner have been postponed because of future environmental development planned for those areas. Lewes residents have requested tree planting on the grassed area in Cross Way and outside two of the homes in Prince Edwards Road. These have also been successfully surveyed and we are now waiting for the results of consultations with the residents before going further.

We regularly check the trees which we have planted to see what maintenance might be needed, and this is where working with groups of residents has proved to be very fruitful. Sadly, one of the alders, which we planted on the large area of grass between Abergavenny Road and Heron's Court in March 2017, was partly uprooted a few weeks ago. However, speedy action in replanting it, with a new stake and some extra mulching, appears to have saved it for future years.

We are lucky to have so many lovely trees around Lewes yet our i-Tree Eco Survey, (available on our website <https://friends-of-lewes.org.uk/natural-environment/lewes-urban-arboretum/itree-survey/>), tells us that we need to have increase our tree cover from 11.5% to 20% in order to improve it.

We are pleased to report that the Town Council supports our ambition to plant one or more Oaks in or near Pells Recreation Ground. We will need to wait until plans for developments to the Recreation Ground and the nearby flood barriers are confirmed but we have identified several good places where an oak may be planted. Thank you to John Webber and Cherry Baden-Powell for their help with this project.

We are always interested to hear ideas about further tree planting from members and you may contact us by e-mail: [arboretum@friends-of-lewes.org.uk](mailto:arboretum@friends-of-lewes.org.uk)

The leaves of the  
Lucombe Oak, one of the  
special oaks already  
growing at the Pells.



## **Lewes Heritage Open Days 12-15<sup>th</sup> September**

Although many of the buildings and events that require booking in advance will now be full, you will still be able to drop in to places like Southover Grange, the Town Hall, the Freemasons Hall and the Law Courts.



Also three private houses have open access (23 Station Street, The Round House in Pipe Passage and Lamb House on Chapel Hill).

Priory School Chapel, on left, Westgate Chapel and St Anne's church have put on special events, and Jonathan Swan (jewellers) and Reeves (photographers) will give 'behind the scenes' access to their historic shops.

You can see more details via the Friends of Lewes web-site, or pick up a leaflet from the tourist office. Many thanks to all those who have volunteered to undertake stewarding over the weekend, and also thanks to this year's commercial sponsors Adams & Remers, Gorrings Auctioneers, Rise Joinery and the Halas & Batchelor Collection, as well as to our Town and District Councils.

### **Future events: Talks & Visits**

**TALKS:** The first of the next series of talks will be on Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup>. Tom Reeves will show slides from the Reeves Collection showing the town's changing High Street over the decades. In anticipation of a larger audience, this will be held in Trinity Church, Southover at 7.45pm.

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, Aimee Felus will describe the challenges of water management in a chalk landscape and on 29<sup>th</sup> of January Chris Rowland from OVESCO will talk about Sustainable Energy Generation in a historic town. Please get these dates in your diaries now.

**VISIT:** There is an opportunity to visit Gosnell's new factory on Malling Brooks on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> September, starting at 10am. There is no charge and the tour will last between 60 and 90 minutes. The maximum group size is 9, so 'first come, first served', but another tour can be arranged at a later date. If interested, please contact the Secretary, Marcus Taylor on [enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk) or by post to the Town Hall address.

### **Changing of the guard**

After many years committed service our Chairman, Robert Cheesman, and secretary, Marcus Taylor, have both indicated they will relinquish their posts as Chairman and Secretary respectively at the March 2020 Annual General Meeting, when their service will be suitably recognized.

A Succession Planning committee has been formed, tasked with ensuring a successful transition to new officers in these roles. In the course of its work to date, the committee has agreed a recruitment process, and identified the need for new roles to share some of the burden. As a result, we will be looking for suitable individuals to take on the following: Chair, Secretary, Minutes Secretary, and responsibility for PR/Communications and for promoting sales of FoL books. Our search for candidates will start in the autumn, with a view to having successors identified in good time for induction and transition before the AGM.

We would welcome hearing from anyone interested in any of these roles: in the first instance please get in touch with us via the [Contact Us](#) page on our website, [friends-of-lewes.org.uk](http://friends-of-lewes.org.uk)

### **Lewes Community Land Trust**

This organisation is working with the District Council to progress opportunities to build homes for rent and sale that are affordable to local people. It is also continuing to seek opportunities for shared equity purchase and identification of new town for affordable homes for local people. It has now converted to a membership based 'Community Benefit Society'. It is an open membership organisation that any Lewes resident or worker over the age of 18 can join: Life membership costs £ 1, which buys a non-transferrable share in the company and the right to vote at our General Meeting. An application form can be obtained from Lewes CLT, c/o 5 Toronto Terrace, Lewes, BN7 2DU or join online at [www.lewesclt.com](http://www.lewesclt.com)

