



KEEPING OUR TOWN SPECIAL

Annual Report 2021



Picture by Nick Robinson

This first job as Chair in this report to you, our members, needs to be to thank you for that membership. Thanks to you, every one of over 400, the many projects that the Friends get involved in which require funds as well as time are made possible.

If you had asked me last year, I might have hoped that I would be writing against the backdrop of a world more like the one we took for granted before the pandemic. However, this is not quite where we are yet; in the last few weeks more people I know seem to have had Covid than at any other point in the pandemic and yet all sorts of previous restrictions have been rescinded. From strange to confusing times.

Throughout the last year the Executive Committee, Planning Committee, Heritage Open Day Committee, Membership Services Committee and Trees Committee have all continued to meet – sometimes online - and wherever possible moving back to some in person meetings. During 2021 regular meetings online took place for members to enjoy talks on Zoom and the AGM and the ever-resourceful Jane Slater from the Executive Committee tried her best to speak to as many of you as possible by phone. The 2021 AGM had to be virtual because of the pandemic, but we corresponded with members by emailing and voting still took place on the resolutions albeit by Zoom, email and post so that everyone could take part and not having an internet connection was no barrier to taking part. Our Goals remain an important focus for our work and thanks are due Bronagh Liddicoat and Martin Ackland for their comprehensive overhaul and review of our goals to keep them up to date and as useful as ever.

The Planning Committee has continued to scrutinise applications within the town and those close by which will have an impact on Lewes. See pages 5 - 8 for full details including new documents pertaining to the large Malling Farm development, the former Wenban Smith buildings or Eastgate Wharf and the vexed question of Lewes Bus Station. A new addition to the work of the planning committee over the past year has been to do with flood prevention and protection. This is taking over from the Lewes Flood Action group set up after the 2000 flood which has recently wound up. See page 7 for all the details of the ensuring review of the fluid flood protection measures and plans for future actions. Many thanks are due to all planning committee members, especially Chris Kneale and Bronagh Liddicoat who has taken on the new flood related work. North Street Quarter, which now has new developers in the form of Human Nature, is given its own section in this report and you can read many of the new details on pages 8 - 9. Thanks to the committee members who have been involving in drawing this up and especially Roger Maskew for detailed work on this and to Peter Earl for all his work in drawing together the plans for the Heritage Open Day.

Turn to page 10 for news of the excellent work of your Trees Committee which has been actively planting throughout the pandemic, socially distanced in varying degrees. Thanks are due to all the dedicated members of this committee especially Audrey Jarvis, its tireless chair. On pages 11-12 you can find out about Barbara Merchant's work documenting trends in engagement with both our members and the wider community through the website. Thanks are due to Barbara for her work in making the website an attractive internet venue and for developing our presence on Facebook.

The financial accounts and review follow on page 12 to 13 from our Honorary Treasurer Melanie Gregory – many thanks are due to her for all her work on this, making the potentially dry topic more inviting and clearly set out. Next Jane Slater updates you on the interesting work that has been done keeping everyone “in the loop” with a number of different speakers on diverse topics and more talks planned for the coming year. At the end of this update, membership news with great strides being made into the 21st Century with an online system being set up. Although we are sadly losing our membership secretary Paul Mockford, who is standing down, we have the opportunity to welcome and introduce Diana Wilkins our new membership secretary.

This year we have three retiring committee members: Chris Kneale, Martin Ackland & Paul Mockford. We will miss all of you and wish you well in your retirement from office. I also need to thank Audrey Jarvis for her work as Vice Chair over the past year and welcome Roger Maskew as the incoming Vice Chair for 2022. This address would not be complete without one more very important thank you from myself as chair to our inestimable and essential secretary Diana Freestone who does so much to keep me on track in this role.

My very best wishes

Ruth

THE FRIENDS OF LEWES
The Lewes Civic Society
Lewes Town Council Offices, Town Hall, High Street
LEWES, East Sussex BN7 2QS
Registered Charity No 258756

Web site: www.friends-of-lewes.org.uk email address: enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk

Personnel on 31st December 2021

President: John Davey

Vice-Presidents: Peter Mettyear & Maria Caulfield MP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elected Officers

| | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Chair | Ruth O'Keeffe |
| Vice-Chair | Audrey Jarvis |
| Secretary | Diana Freestone |
| Treasurer | Melanie Gregory |

Elected Members at March 2020

Roger Beasley
Peter Earl
Phil Green
Roger Maskew
Chris Kneale
Jane Slater

**Elected Members at March 2021
AGM**

Martin Ackland
Peter Earl
Chris Kneale
Bronagh Liddicoat
Roger Maskew
Barbara Merchant
Jane Slater

The Mayor of Lewes has the right to attend Executive Committee meetings.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Chris Kneale (Chair)*
Martin Ackland*
John Kennett
Bronagh Liddicoat*
Roger Maskew*
Frances Tufnell
Nick Wiseman
Carolyn Beckingham (Minutes Secretary)

HERITAGE OPEN DAY COMMITTEE

Peter Earl (Chair)*
David Attwood
Paul Benjamin
Sue Berry
Diana Freestone*
Phil Green
David Hutchinson
Philip Pople

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES COMMITTEE

Marcus Taylor (Chair)
Michael Bell
Bronagh Liddicoat*
Barbara Merchant*
Paul Mockford (Membership Secretary)
Jane Slater*

TREES COMMITTEE

Audrey Jarvis (Chair)*
Chris Bibb
Phil Green
Nick Jarvis
James Newmarch
Phil Newmarch
David Saunders
Matthew Stuart
Advisers:
Duncan Armstrong, Dean Bell, Talitha Bromwich,
Keith Sacre, Peter Thurman, Dan Wynn

**Member of the Executive Committee*

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Who we are

The Friends of Lewes, founded in 1952, is the Lewes Civic Society, a registered charity with over 400 members. Membership is open to all, on payment of the relevant subscription. Although wholly independent we are allied to the national organisation, Civic Voice, a national umbrella body for similar groups. The number of members as at 31/12/21 is 420.

Our Mission is to conserve and enhance key aspects of the town: its history, distinctive buildings and the national environment, and its social, cultural and economic well-being – we aim to keep Lewes special.

How we are run

Constitution

The Charity is established for the public benefit to pursue the following in the area comprising the Town of Lewes and its immediate surrounding area

To promote:

- high standards of planning and design in or affecting Lewes and ensure that new development is sensitively sited in relation to the surrounding environment.
- the conservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest, and the physical and natural environment
- enhancement of the built environment in, and the social, cultural and economic well-being.
- free access to the public realm.

To stimulate:

- public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character.

To co-operate:

- with public authorities and other bodies in fulfilling these objectives in the area.

Committees

The members of Friends of Lewes Executive Committee are the Charity Trustees. Officers are elected at the Annual General Meeting each year and half of the ten elected members retire each year but are eligible for re-election. Four members can be coopted to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets monthly and appoints sub-committees which includes the Planning Committee which examines all planning applications affecting Lewes and surrounding areas, the Trees Committee and Membership Committee.

Meetings and talks

In normal times we hold an Annual General Meeting, providing formal opportunity to allow members to put their views forward. In addition, we arrange talks on a wide range of topics relating to Lewes and these events are listed in the Diary. During 2021 the Corona Virus pandemic prevented the physical AGM taking place. Members were advised by email of the Agenda and voting took place via email and post to elect the proposed resolutions. Talks on a range of topics successfully took place thanks to Jane Slater who will provide an update later in this report.

Communications

We keep members up to date via our Facebook page as well as the website and regular emails. We publish regular Newsletters and an Annual Report and during 2021 launched a series of successful Zoom Coffee Time Talks.

Our Goals and Objectives:

1. To bring further benefits to the town by placing increased emphasis on influencing relevant policy makers at national, regional and local levels (for example on, planning, transport, housing, highways, parking). These policy makers include the South Downs National Park Authority, East Sussex County Council, Lewes-Eastbourne District Council, Lewes Town Council and others.
2. To work with others to promote and protect the vitality of businesses in and around our High Street, preserve its range of buildings and businesses, and safeguard its community value in the face of commercial change and problematic traffic management.
3. To preserve the integrity of the Conservation Areas in Lewes through our vigilance and close liaison with local highways and planning authorities.
4. To bring about reduced carbon emissions by engaging with developers and encouraging them to adopt carbon neutral and other ecologically sound innovations in construction practices in new builds and renovations.
5. To increase tree canopy cover in Lewes, from the current 11.5% to the minimum recommendation for urban environments of 20%. We will do this by building on our successful projects to date and supporting other local groups with similar aims.
6. To improve our environment, increase biodiversity and mitigate the risks resulting from climate change by collaborating with other Lewes-based groups with such aims.
7. To learn, and to seek support for our local efforts, by engaging more broadly with other civic societies and Civic Voice.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE AGAINST OUR GOALS

Planning

The important task of considering development proposals affecting the town by the Friends of Lewes Planning Committee has continued. The Committee meets each month to examine planning applications, listed building consent applications and advertisement consents submitted to the South Downs National Park Planning Authority (SDNPA). Because of Covid-19, meetings have been held online throughout the year and for those members of the committee who are unable to join, their written comments on the applications are considered. Some 260 applications were examined in detail during the year and representations made on 102. The Trees Committee also submit comments on tree works applications via the Planning Committee, which submits representations to the SDNPA online on their behalf.

Planning applications

The Planning Committee looks at all applications within the Lewes town boundary and those in the surrounding area which may have an impact on the town. Responsibility for determining planning applications falls to the SDNPA, but most applications are determined by Lewes District Council planners under an agency arrangement with the SDNPA. Those applications that may have a significant impact on the landscape of the town and the wider National Park are called in by the SDNPA and determined by their Planning Committee. The Friends' Planning Committee comments are submitted via the online planning portal, which records the representations made to each application and notifies the planning officer considering the application. The comments, which are in the public domain, are taken into account when the application is determined by officers, having regard to national, SDNPA and local Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Significant applications considered in the year have included new documents published with respect to housing development at Old Malling Farm. The Friends maintained their objection that the prospect of 226 houses with provision for 450 cars having only one vehicular access will result in a car dependent development based on a number of 'cul-de-sacs' and be totally unsustainable. It argues that the single road access at the north end will lead to longer road journeys than if there was an access point at the south end. The consequences will be inconvenience to the site's residents, nuisance from additional traffic to existing residents in Old Malling Way and increased noise and air pollution in the area.

A strong objection was made to the proposal to demolish the former Wenban Smith woodyard buildings at Eastgate Wharf as development in the conservation area should only proceed if and when replacement buildings or alternative development are planned. The Society has repeatedly asked the owners about their development plans for the site, over many years, yet nothing has been forthcoming.

Similarly, an objection was made to the redevelopment of Lewes Bus Station as the plans contained no proposals for a replacement bus station either on site or elsewhere. The Society strongly believes that a central bus interchange is essential in Lewes if the Government's call for increased use of public transport is to be met. The Society also considered that the proposed development was completely out of scale for the site and that the buildings would dominate the whole of this central area of Lewes

The Friends are becoming increasingly concerned at the loss of commercial sites within the town to residential use, which have not been allocated for housing in the Lewes Neighbourhood Plan or the South Downs Local Plan. The Society therefore objected to a pre-application for redevelopment of The Malthouse in Daveys Lane for housing as it considers it important that the central employment area of Malling is maintained with a mix of industrial/business premises for a range of uses. It considers the site should be safeguarded as an employment site to provide local employment in the town.

Planning policy consultations

The Society welcomed the opportunity to comment on the Draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which the SDNPA published for consultation. In its response we supported the principles of the SPD and made detailed comments on the proposed policy guidance. The document sets out what is desirable and what is not in the design of developments and provides a consistent background for design within the South Downs National Park. When adopted, the SPD will be very helpful when considering planning applications and talking to developers on their proposals.

Street Lighting

The Planning Committee has raised concerns in recent years over the replacement of traditional street lighting with new LED street lights. When street lights are replaced standard LED bulbs with a cold white spectrum are installed. This makes historic buildings look very grey in appearance and East Sussex County Council was therefore asked to consider using an alternative warm white LED in the Conservation Areas. Following protracted discussions, the County Council has finally agreed that warm white LEDs will be used in the Conservation Areas. It is a good example of how the Friends of Lewes has successfully influenced the character of the townscape in Lewes.

Flood risk

The Friends were asked to take over the work of Lewes Flood Action, the voluntary campaigning group established in 2001, following their decision to wind it up. The group aimed to ensure that the town received proper protection from river flooding and alert the local community and the authorities responsible for the town's flood protection and river management needs. Their work had included research into the flood insurance problems experienced by local residents and the organisation of a campaign in support of better national funding of flood defences. The Society, agreed to take over aspects of the work that are relevant to it and to work with partners to support measures to reduce surface water flooding in Lewes, both fluvial (river) and pluvial (extreme rainfall).

The first task has been to review progress on fluvial flood protection measures against the recommendations in both the Environment Agency's River Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan (2008) and East Sussex County Council's Lewes Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan (2017). 1811 properties, including 700 homes have been protected since 2004 in Lewes and Newhaven by new defences on the East Bank in the Malling/Spences Lane area, in the Cliffe/South Street area and on the West Bank by Landport. In line with the Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (2020), a natural flood management project has also successfully reduced flood peaks in an area north of Lewes. Improved flood management of the Winterbourne stream has also benefitted adjacent residents and businesses.

In addition, it has been identified that the impact of increasing rain intensity, combined with increasing impermeable urban areas (pavements and roofs) has led to a number of roads flooding following heavy rain. This occurs when existing sewers are unable to cope with the increased flow and volume. East Sussex County Council now provides advice and guidance to developers on the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which are designed to slow down water flow and allow rainfall to soak into the ground rather than entering the sewer.

The Society has also been supporting The Aquifer Programme (TAP), in an initiative working to raise awareness of the benefits of Raingardens which slow down runoff, filtering the pollution in road runoff and reducing localised flooding. Advice on the design and build of raingardens will be made available and will include practical workshops. The Friends welcome a TAP project at Wallands School which will replace a large area of impermeable playground with permeable surfacing and adjacent features to reduce the current runoff down Hill Road and Offham Road which can contribute to localised flooding. Working with members of Transition Town Lewes, the Society is also promoting information on the many benefits of using permeable surfacing for driveway extensions in domestic settings to reduce local flooding and retain habitats for insects and birds.

The Planning Committee has been encouraged to see an increase in planning applications incorporating permeable paving and/or rainwater butts on downpipes from roofs, all of which help slow down the runoff after intensive rainfall and reduce local surface water flooding.

Planning guidance

In addition to the existing guidance notes on Dormer Windows, Garden Rooms and Shop Fronts a new planning guidance note on Retail to Residential conversion was published in May, aimed at local planning authorities, property owners, developers and architects. The guide covers shop premises which have become vacant followed by a planning application for permission to change the use from a retail shop to a residential dwelling. It is important that the town centre maintains its vitality. The guidance seeks to define a clear policy framework that allows any justifiable change to be carefully managed to maintain the character of the conservation area. The new guidance was launched at the Friends' Future of the High Street seminar, held online.

Chris Kneale & Bronagh Liddicoat

North Street Quarter

Human Nature published their "The Phoenix Project Design Festival Report" on the 21st December 2021. The report of 51 pages contained a detailed and interesting review of the various components of the proposed scheme which was welcomed.

In addition, the "Sustainable Development and Living Webinar", hosted by the South Downs Network took place on the 08th December and subsequently 'posted' on the 12th December, was an opportunity for Human Nature to explain their vision and plan for the Phoenix Project, together with a summary and video of the Design Festival held in September. In addition, the Masterplan and Design Outline for the site were explained together with the proposed use of sustainable materials and construction methods throughout this project, also proved to be very informative.

However, both in the report and during the presentation at the webinar there was little reference to the wider context and there lacked any explanation how the Phoenix Project would relate to the existing townscape of Lewes. As a result, it would appear that the proposals were too self-contained for such a 'strategic site', which could be considered as a potential cause for concern.

A range of issues to be addressed were identified in the report, although integration of the development with the rest of the town was not considered a priority.

In terms of the type of residential development proposed for this project it has become apparent that the scheme is promoting a different way of living with a large number of small apartments proposed with more shared space, which could be welcomed. It would bring about a change in the geography of Lewes with the centre of the town shifting east.

In terms of density, it would appear that some of the buildings would be taller than those proposed in earlier schemes for this site but a precedent has already been set in Lewes for taller buildings in other developments. This scheme would represent a different approach to residential development to meet the needs of a younger demographic that does not own cars and have a greater emphasis on walking or cycling to local amenities. This scheme has a long way to go but is potentially exciting.

The Phoenix Project proposals include the retention of a number of the existing industrial buildings which would provide accommodation for a wide variety of commercial enterprises. However, their retention would effectively reduce the area of site available for residential use and is likely to result in high densities of development and taller buildings.

The proposed reduction of vehicular traffic within the site as a part of this proposed change of lifestyle with a greater emphasis on walking and cycling is also welcomed. An integral part of this proposal will be the provision of a 'Mobility Hub' to which all the deliveries to the site would be made and the items delivered locally to their destination. In addition, there would be provision for shopping / visitor parking and the ability to hire bicycles or a variety of electric vehicles.

However, the prospect of a 'Mobility Hub' being located adjacent to Phoenix Causeway could result in a multi-storey car park being located at the gateway to Lewes which would not enhance the townscape at this important location. Furthermore, the traffic implications of this approach have yet to be assessed in terms of whether there is likely to be an adverse impact on the existing traffic problems in the centre of Lewes and throughout the Conservation Area.

On a point of detail, at a recent 'zoom' meeting organised by the SDNPA, (the South Downs National Park Authority), Human Nature sought urgent consultations on whether two-way traffic could be reintroduced into Eastgate Street as it would be an important link for both cyclists and pedestrians to the Phoenix Project site.

Compared to the previous scheme for this site, the proposed 'Health Hub' has been relocated to a more remote location on the site which may prove more difficult to access for less mobile patients and as such remains a matter for concern.

On the 01st March 2022, Human Nature issued their latest "Phoenix Project Newsletter", which included the following 'key dates':-

1. Design Freeze: March 2022
2. Public Exhibition: April 2022
3. Submission of Planning Application: May 2022
4. Determination of Planning Application: Autumn 2022
5. Infrastructure Work begins: January 2023
6. Phase 1 work begins: August 2023

On the 09th March 2022 the Friends of Lewes had another very useful meeting with Human Nature, who updated us on the latest situation on the progress of the proposals for the Phoenix Project which has included a series of meetings with officers from the South Downs National Park Authority.

As detailed above, the design of the proposals is to be finalised by the end of this month with a Public Exhibition in April prior to the submission of the outline planning application in May with detailed planning applications for the various parts of the site to follow over the next 5-6 years. The news of this extended timescale is considered to be disappointing.

Members are encouraged to visit the proposed Public Exhibition in April in order to have an opportunity to assess the proposals for themselves.

Once the Outline Planning Application has been submitted, there will be an opportunity to discuss the proposals in more detail.

Roger Maskew

Trees Committee Report

Goal 5: To increase tree canopy cover in Lewes, from the current 11.5% to the minimum recommendation for urban environments of 20%. We will do this by building on our successful projects to date and supporting other local groups with similar aims.

In January 2021 we added to the 27 trees already planted at Lewes Cemetery in November 2020 by planting a special Elm tree, *Ulmus* “New Horizon”, awarded to us by the Tree Council to celebrate thirty years of their Tree Wardens Scheme. We were back at the cemetery at the beginning of February, to plant a wildlife hedge of 250 native whips at the Southern boundary, including Field Maple, Alder, Blackthorn, Alder Buckthorn, Guelder Rose, Hawthorn, Hazel, Hornbeam, Dog Rose, Rowan, Spindle and Oak. The trees and hedges were chosen to provide a long flowering season to benefit bees and other pollinators. A potential increase in biodiversity is also provided by another wildlife hedge which we planted in February alongside the fence by Jubilee Gardens. These 200 whips included Field Maple, Hornbeam, Spindle, Blackthorn, Downy Birch, Silver Birch, Pedunculate Oak, Hawthorn, Dog Rose, and Hazel.



In April we responded to Green United’s “Big Ask” plea to community groups to offer support to Lewes schoolchildren so that their requests for actions to mitigate climate change could be put into action. Following the “Big Gathering” meeting with the children in June, we met with children and staff of Western Road and Southover Schools who asked us to help them plant more trees and hedges in their shared playing fields. By the end of the year, we had finalised a marvellous plan for each of the 550 pupils and staff to plant one tree whip each to make a wildlife hedge around the perimeter of the field in January 2022!

After much planning and preparation, in November we were able to complete our ambitious project of planting 31 more street trees in Prince Edward’s Road, King Henry’s Road, and Gundreda Road. The trees included Tulip tree, Japanese Pagoda tree, Hop Hornbeam, Chinese Elm, Cockspurthorn, Field Maple, Nettle tree, Liquidambar and Ginkgo. We were very fortunate that most of the costs of the trees were met through a successful grant application to Sussex Community Foundation, a donation from Sparks Property and further donations and bequests from residents.

We ended the year where we began – back at Lewes Cemetery to plant two more Hybrid Larch trees. This brought our total number of mature trees planted since 2014 to 114, with 1,200 whips planted as hedges. We visit each of the trees and hedgerows twice a year to weed, mulch and prune them as needed. This is just as important as planting them and it is a pleasure to watch them grow!

Working with other groups to improve our environment

Goal 6: To improve our environment, increase biodiversity and mitigate the risks resulting from climate change by collaborating with other Lewes-based groups with such aims.

In March and April, we were at Lewes Cemetery once more to sow seeds and plant wildflower plugs in a joint project with LDC and SDNPA.

Throughout the year, Lewes Swift Supporters, (LSS), funded and installed 25 new Swift nest boxes in Lewes, partly funded by a generous grant from Friends of Lewes. This is part of the LSS project to expand existing Swift colonies by providing nest spaces to compensate for those nooks and crannies under eaves that have been lost through demolition, development, or renovation.

Preparation of the tree and wildflower nursery site was able to begin by November. This is a Lewes Nature Mosaic collaboration involving volunteers from Lewes Urban Arboretum, Wildflower Lewes, Common Cause, and the Railway Land Wildlife Trust. We intend to use the space to plant locally sourced tree and wildflower seeds for specific Lewes sites – and we hope to start growing in 2022!

In October we spent a delightful evening at Baxter's Field, helping the Brownies to plant 25 small trees which they had planted as seeds two years ago.

In November and December, members of the Trees Committee helped to rake several of the Wildflower Lewes sites and then sowed the Yellow Rattle seeds that had been funded by a grant from Friends of Lewes.

Through our affiliation with Lewes Climate Hub, we were delighted to be involved in the Planet Party in September held on the Railway Land and at the Cop26 Biodiversity Day which they hosted at Depot in November. At these events, and at Tree Day at the Linklater Pavilion in December, we presented our map of all the trees and hedges we have planted so far in Lewes and posters sharing key facts from our i-Tree survey to explain why we all need more trees in Lewes to build our resilience to climate change. You can see an electronic copy of our map on the Lewes Urban Arboretum pages of our website: <https://friends-of-lewes.org.uk/natural-environment/lewes-urban-arboretum/>

Audrey Jarvis

Increased engagement with the local Community

The past two years, despite, or perhaps partly because of the changes forced upon us by Covid, have defied initial expectations and seen the clearest rise in membership for some time with 48 new members in the past year – a net gain of 21 to reach 420 and a marked rise in social media activity.

Use of the Friends of Lewes website has continued to grow, with Views (or hits) per year climbing to over 25,000 in 2021. The number of Views each month exceeded those of the same month in all previous years, barring December.

The most popular website pages in 2021 appear to be on planning/building developments, followed by heritage issues, and the environment.

There was a significant rise in the number of Views of our Membership page: 436 (151 in 2020) and also of our Newsletters: 637 (263 in 2020).

News item Followers: Website - 131 News item subscribers (2020: 100), +31%
 Facebook - 637 following FriendsOfLewes (2020: 533), +20%
 Facebook - 460 following LewesUrbanArboretum (2020: 412),
 +12%

Pages promoting our talks were also popular. Talks became Zoom webinars and drew in larger audiences and are no longer tied only to the winter months. The spring talk on building materials has been preserved on the website as an illustrated essay.

Jane Slater continues to arrange regular online Coffee Mornings for members covered a wide range of topics and has a small but appreciative following.

Improved publicity remains a significant gain and, along with the data above, indicates a marked change under the overview of Barbara Merchant, to whom many thanks are due.

Marcus Taylor

Friends of Lewes Accounts & Financial Review 2021

Receipts and Payments

General Fund

There was an overall surplus in 2021 of £6,900 (2020: £3,300), a net change of £3,600. Net receipts increased by £3,200, due in the main to a very generous donation of £3,000 from The John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust.

At £2,900, expenditure was just £400 below that for 2020 at £3,300, as Covid-19 continued to have an impact on the Society's 2021 expenditure plans.

With no remuneration being paid to, nor any benefit obtained from a related entity by any trustee, and with only minimal expenses in the course of the Society's business being reimbursed, the cost of running Friends of Lewes remained stable at £1,700.

Restricted Trees Fund

Total receipts paid into the Trees Fund (which is restricted to expenditure on tree planting) was £2,800 (2020: £5,900). The successful bid of £4,500 to the Sussex Community Foundation for 2021 tree planting schemes received in 2020, was supplemented further by a number of donations during 2021. The balance came from participation in the Lewes District Lottery, income from which currently goes wholly to support tree planting.

This meant that the Trees Fund was able to finance all the 2021 trees expenditure of £7,300 and leave a healthy balance of £5,700 for future planting. Consequently, the £2,500 support that was anticipated would be needed from the General Fund, brought forward from 2020, was not drawn upon.

Balance Sheet

At the end of the 2021 financial year, the Society's total monetary assets on the unrestricted funds account amounted to £60,000 with £5,700 on the restricted (trees) fund, all of which is held in Charities Aid Foundation bank accounts. Stocks of books and tea towels valued at £2,200 were also held.

Reserves Policy

The Executive Committee considers that the current General Fund cash reserve held is more than appropriate to its needs for the smooth running of the Society in 2022 and beyond. This will allow the Society to support new projects in the coming years.

M J Gregory – Hon Treasurer

A full copy of the Society's accounts will be available on our website from the 4th April 2022. If you would like a hard copy posted or emailed to you, after this date, please contact us.

Keeping you in the 'Loop'

One of Friends of Lewes Civic Society Goals is to increase our engagement with the local community. During the past year we have continued to hold a series Coffee Time Talks to keep our Members informed and up to date. By sending out Zoom Links to our Members we are able to keep us all 'in the Loop'.

These Coffee Time Talks are freely available to the Members of the Friends of Lewes. If you would like to join in and attend our talks you can find details on our Membership page on the website and we will send you a Zoom link a few days before each talk. More information is available from the honorary secretary, Diana Freestone, via email - enquiries@friends-of-lewes.org.uk

Friends of Lewes Coffee Time Talks held by Zoom in 2021

To our **Guest Speakers** who have kindly given up their time to entertain and enlighten us over the past year we give our many thanks

Speakers have included the following kind people who gave up their time to talk to us on a wide range of subjects.

Ewa Burman who gave us 2 Cookery Demonstrations one with the most delicious cakes and the more recent one in December when Ewa made all the meals enjoyed in Poland over the Christmas period.

Marcus Taylor, the Chairman of the Membership Committee, recounted his time as a contestant on Mastermind and reminded us all about the very good books available through the Friends of Lewes, at a member's discount, recounting the history of the buildings and streets of Lewes. **Eileen Blyth** who is studying her Ancestors who lived in Lewes in 1624 and gave us ideas to follow if we wish to study our own ancestors. **Tom Crossett** updated us on the latest COVID developments and we covered the impact of Climate Change

In September. **Ruth O'Keeffe**, the Chairman of Friends of Lewes, described the relevance of Climate change through geographical eras and **Carola Godman Irvine** a local farmer, recounted how members of the farming community are battling to bring food to us all despite all the new rules and regulations. **Christina Hall** from Breaky Bottom Vineyard told us how she works alongside her husband, Peter and the team, throughout the year. As well as supporting the work in the vineyard and winery, she shared her love of the countryside and the wildlife by hosting visits from local schools. She is also a well-respected artist

John Wilton, a retired Teacher, has a fascinating collection of postcards sent from soldier mainly stationed in France during the First World War. He came twice as on the first occasion, not being an expert in showing photos at a Zoom meeting I managed the get the cards out of order which broke the continuity of the Talk. The second time I managed to show them in the correct order which helped enormously! John has now written a book based on these cards and so we may have another chance to hear his stories of WWII.

As environmental issues are so important now talks by **Lesley Healey** from Wildflower Lewes and **Vivien Yule**'s talk on Wild Birds were both fascinating. I hope to persuade **Audrey Jarvis** to come and tell us all, sometime this year, of her work dedicated to planting trees in every available space around Lewes

Jane Slater

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We plan to implement an online Membership system in April. This will allow you to update your own contact information, renew your membership and pay by credit card, Paypal, BACs, Standing orders and cheques.

Friends of Lewes Zoom Coffee time talks to be held in May & July 2022

17th May - Marcus Taylor

Cockshut and Winterbourne – the streams of western Lewes”.

Marcus Taylor looks at two streams in Lewes which, though very short, have had a significant effect on the town over the centuries. One made possible the building of Lewes Priory and supplied its advanced drainage systems and ponds with water. The other, with its seasonal flow and thus a dry channel for much of the year, has brought disruptive flooding to Southover on many occasions.



12th July - Tam Large & Mike Sewell

Veteran Adventures on the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run.

From Zero to Hero - driving a 120 year old car to Brighton on the world's oldest motoring event.

Mike Sewell & Tam Large's sometimes hilarious, sometimes frustrating, experiences getting a stubborn 1900 Veteran car to work: finally reaching Brighton on the 9th attempt and winning a national prize for their perseverance. As well as stories of their fun with Model T Fords and ancient bicycles.



All members will be sent a Link to your email address prior to the Coffee Time Talks. On the day of the event, you just click on the Zoom link and you will be fascinated to hear our guest speakers. Our Talks are usually held on a Tuesday from 10.30am and we aim to hold 6 or so a year. You will also be given the chance to ask our speakers questions.

I very much look forward to seeing you at our future Talks

Bring your own coffee and we will provide some interesting speakers to keep us up to date with the latest events in Lewes!

Best wishes – Jane Slater