



NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2022



Photograph by Nick Robinson

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter from *Ruth O'Keeffe - Chair of Friends of Lewes*

It turns out that I am writing this short piece for the newsletter following the deeply sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. This is a momentous time, and one which will doubtless inspire a range of emotions. I dedicate this article to the memory of an incredible woman that in my own civic duties I was privileged to meet twice in person.

I know from my second conversation with the Queen that she greatly valued and enjoyed the visit she made to Lewes nearly 10 years ago now, and fondly remembered her time at Harvey's Brewery where the Duke of Edinburgh started the process of the brewing of a special edition of Harveys.

Many of you will have fond memories of the Queen, who defined so much of our national character for so long. She has been rightly described in recent days as a rock of strength for the nation, and she has been there for her country through many and varied threats during a long and eventful reign.

Queen Elizabeth started her public service even earlier than her coronation, at a time when the Second World War was in progress, as Princess Elizabeth. There are many photographs documenting her time training as a mechanic as a teenager, joining the Auxiliary Territorial Service at age 18. She remains the only female member of the Royal Family to have served in the armed forces. My mother, who was a child during the war, clearly remembers being inspired by her example, and this newsletter will doubtless be read by others who remember this time. For many alive today in the UK she is the only monarch we have ever known.

Across the country and around the world, millions of people have been touched by her dignity, devotion and unfailing sense of duty. In the days ahead, we will all reflect on the impact of the Queen's passing with great admiration and respect.

In 1947 when the Queen was 21 and still a Princess, she made the famous speech in which she dedicated her life to service; this short passage from it sums up the enormous commitment she made and never failed to honour, to the very last; greeting the new Prime Minister a very short time before her death:

"...we must give nothing less than the whole of ourselves. There is a motto which has been borne by many of my ancestors - a noble motto, 'I serve'. Those words were an inspiration to many bygone heirs to the Throne when they made their knightly dedication as they came to manhood. I cannot do quite as they did.

But through the inventions of science, I can do what was not possible for any of them. I can make my solemn act of dedication with a whole Empire listening. I should like to make that dedication now. It is very simple.

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do: I know that your support will be unfailingly given. God help me to make good my vow, and God bless all of you who are willing to share in it."

There is a book of condolence in Lewes Town Hall which you may wish to add to. For those of you who would prefer to send an online message of condolence here is the website address: <https://www.royal.uk/send-message-condolence>. The website advises that a selection of the messages will be passed on to members of the Royal Family may be held in the Royal Archives for posterity.

On Sunday 11th September the formal declaration of the accession of King Charles III was made in Lewes outside the Town Hall by current Mayor Shirley Sains.

My very best wishes to you all in these sad and momentous times.

Ruth

Planning Update *from Roger Maskew*

Since the Spring / Summer Newsletter issued in June 2022 there have been three further meetings of the Planning Committee at the beginning of July, August and September, when a total of 66 applications were considered and comments made to the relevant planning authority on 14 submissions.

As previously reported a strong objection was made to the proposal to demolish the former **Wenban Smith** woodyard buildings at Eastgate Wharf. However, this application has subsequently been withdrawn, which is to be welcomed. It is hoped that the owners of the site will bring forward proposals for the full redevelopment of this important riverside site in tandem with the development of the Phoenix Quarter, Eastgate car park and the bus station.

A planning application to redevelop the **Lewes Bus Station** was lodged by the Generator Group and as previously reported, was considered at the meeting of the Planning Committee on the 01st June. An official objection was subsequently submitted on behalf of the Friends of Lewes and given the significance of this proposal and the high level of local interest; it was considered appropriate to include the objection in this newsletter as follows: -

SDNP/22/02197/FUL Demolition of existing buildings and construction of mixed-use development comprising 3 houses (Class C3), 37 self-contained flats (Class C3) and 192m2 of ground floor commercial space (Class E), with associated access alterations, landscaping and parking. Former Bus Station Eastgate Street Lewes East Sussex BN7 2LP

The Friends of Lewes strongly object to this application for the following reasons: -

- (1) The design of the proposed development is totally inappropriate for this sensitive location within the Lewes Conservation Area and is not sympathetic to the character of the town.
- (2) The bulk and scale of the proposed development is too dominant in relation to the surrounding area and adjacent buildings and needs to be reduced significantly.
- (3) The site's important corner location requires a more sympathetic design approach, which effectively links the domestic scale of East Street with the more commercial character of Eastgate Street and as such would act as an 'entrance' to the historic town centre of Lewes.
- (4) The proposed development does not meet the requirement for 50% affordable housing in accordance with the South Downs Local Plan Policy SD28 which should be the starting point for the redevelopment of this site.
- (5) The Society considers that the relocation of the existing bus station is an essential pre-requisite to granting planning permission for the redevelopment of this site. The relocation of the bus station should not compromise delivery of the extant planning permission SDNP/15/01146/FUL or other proposals for redevelopment of the North Street Quarter in accordance with Strategic Site Policy SD57.
- (6) As such, the Society considers that a planning condition should be drafted that would prevent the demolition of the existing bus station until a suitable alternative bus facility has been both agreed and implemented.
- (7) With regard to the South Downs Strategic Site Policy SD48 on Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources, the Society would like to encourage the planning authority to demonstrate greater commitment to this policy and to the provision of zero carbon homes.

The SDNPA planning officer's report has now been published and is recommending refusal of the Generator Group's proposals.

The Society is pleased to note that the reasons for refusal have endorsed many of the matters identified in its official objection, (as detailed in items 1 to 7 above).

The SDNPA Planning Committee will consider this application at its meeting in Midhurst on Thursday the 08th September.

The remaining project of significance that is likely to have an impact on both Lewes Town Centre and the Lewes Conservation Area is the anticipated planning submission for the **North Street Quarter**, or the Phoenix Project as promoted by Human Nature, is detailed in the next item of this newsletter.

The North Street Quarter *from Roger Maskew*

Three members of the Executive Committee had a 'zoom' meeting with Human Nature on the 2nd August 2022, when the 'key points' discussed were as follows: -

1. At the beginning of the meeting there was a very useful wide-ranging discussion of a number of concerns that the Friends of Lewes had raised following the both Human Nature's public exhibition in April and a presentation made to the Executive Committee by members of the design team in May.
2. These concerns were detailed in the Spring / Summer Newsletter in June.
3. Human Nature were progressing with a "pre-submission process" with the SDNPA planners at Midhurst on a topic-by-topic basis.
4. The team were also preparing a source book of built form analysis and architectural styles for Lewes in order to establish what they term the "Golden Treads" that aim to integrate the proposed development within the existing historic town.
5. Human Nature are in the process of preparing a "sustainability strategy" with a view to achieving a 'carbon negative' development using sustainable materials within a low traffic neighbourhood.
6. We asked Human Nature to provide further details of how the proposed development will be phased linked to vehicular access points that ensure traffic is not diverted through the conservation area and safe and direct pedestrian and cycle links to the town are secured.
7. Human Nature confirmed that safe routes for cyclists would be provided
8. Human Nature have been seeking to establish a local "Design Code" for the range of buildings to be provided.
9. Human Nature is intending to provide 700 residential units in a range of designs across the site.
10. At the time of the meeting, Human Nature confirmed that they intended to submit a planning application by the end of September and suggested that it could be a 'hybrid' application consisting of an 'Outline Application' for the whole site, plus a 'Detailed Application' for the proposed flood defences.

On the 18th August Human Nature published their latest Phoenix newsletter which specifically referred to "How the 'golden threads' of Lewes will stitch the Phoenix together", when these 'golden threads will "attempt to capture the visual essence of Lewes".

The Newsletter also gave further details on the preparation of the Design Code, which "will control the design of the buildings and public spaces on the Phoenix as each phase of the development is reached".

A further meeting with Human Nature had been arranged for early September but this meeting has now been postponed as the SDNPA planners have now requested “more detailed information on one parcel” of the development which will require more time to prepare.

A meeting with Human Nature has now been proposed for mid-October, when the Society will be updated on the latest progress of the Phoenix Project.

It is anticipated that a ‘Planning Application’ will not now be submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority until early 2023, when details of the proposals will be made public.

Trees Committee Update *from Audrey Jarvis*

Once we had completed all our tree planting for the 2021/2022 season, we began our programme of tree maintenance – visiting all of the wildlife hedges and each of the 123 street trees which we have planted around Lewes to date to weed, mulch and prune them as they needed.

Newly planted trees need to be watered regularly if they are going to become established and survive. By July, we were noticing that the long hot dry period had caused some of the 31 trees which we planted in Prince Edward’s Road, King Henry’s Road and Gundreda Road in November 2021 to look as if they were beginning to suffer due to the lack of rain.

We are very grateful to Matthew Stuart, (Bonny’s Wood and one of the members of our Trees Committee), for spending a whole day going round with Audrey and Nick Jarvis to give them a long drink of much-needed water. Since then, we have been paying someone to water them regularly throughout July and August and they have all recovered well.



Watering the trees in Gundreda Road



Working party beside the newly weeded and pruned wildlife hedge in Jubilee Gardens

Since early in the year we have been researching new sites for tree planting in 2022 -2023. Having made several site visits, consulted with residents and studied all the maps of underground services, we are hopeful that we will be given planting permissions to plant in most of the areas. Some of the original suggestions for sites came from residents and we are pleased to have sites in Malling and Winterbourne on our lists because we haven't planted any trees there yet.



Weeding and mulching a Tulip tree in King Henry's Road

The funding for our tree planting comes from donations, bequests and successful grant applications. Thank you to the Inner Wheel Club who have given us a donation to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. They have asked us to plant a Liquidambar, at a site yet to be decided. Thanks also to the residents of Newton Road, Landport, who have also raised funds so that we can plant a Whitebeam tree beside their road.

Heritage Open Days 2022 – from Peter Earl

The Friends of Lewes Heritage Open Days Committee have again been busy organising this year's local contribution to England's largest festival of history and culture.

The Lewes Heritage Open Day 2022 was launched at a reception at Lewes House on Thursday, 1st September. The reception, also organised by the Friends of Lewes, was attended by Councillor Adrian Ross, Chair of Lewes District Council, the recently appointed High Sheriff of East Sussex for 2022/23, Jane King, and supporters including members of Lewes History Group who are mounting a special exhibition during the event. The reception is held in recognition of the contribution made by volunteers who help with organisation and stewarding over the Heritage Open Days weekend, and also for those who are generous enough to provide the venues, sometimes even their own homes for the event. Speeches of thanks were given by Peter Earl, Councillor Adrian Ross and Jane King explained the historic role of the High Sherriff for guests.

Pictured beneath the society's new awning are right-to-left are Peter Earl, Chair of the HOD committee, Councillor Adrian Ross, Chair of Lewes District Council, the recently appointed High Sheriff of East Sussex for 2022/23, Jane King, and Helen Browning -Smith, Tourism and Arts Manager for Visit Lewes.



The free Lewes Heritage Open Days event ran from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th September featuring visits to buildings in the town, not normally open to the public and guided walks, all part of Lewes's contribution to England's largest festival of history and culture.

In 2021 almost 4300 visits were made to the different venues or participated on the walks. This year's Heritage Open Days theme is innovation and Lewes's heritage illustrates this in its history of printing, brewing, medicine, shipbuilding and iron foundry.

The town programme included 15 different buildings, some with special tours. In addition, 5 different guided walks taking place in the town with 8 start times offered to try and cater for the high level of interest. Booking was open through Eventbrite. 3000 copies of a map leaflet have been produced to ensure availability from the Lewes Tourist Information Centre, Seaford Tourist information Centre and Newhaven Fort, as well as businesses and other places around Lewes and the surrounding villages.

For the second year, the Friends of Lewes put on a display in Lewes House about its work in caring for the heritage, environment, and future of our town. In addition, we also highlighted the history of Lewes House, which was once the home of the art and antiquities collector EP Warren. A number of panels described events in the building from the 18th Century through to the Warren years of 1890 to 1928. We featured a large image of Rodin's sculpture The Kiss, complemented by related Edward Reeves photo lightbox images from that period.

Keeping in touch *from Diana Wilkins*

Email is a great way to find out about our events and to take part in online coffee mornings. However, if you're not hearing from us, it may be worth checking a few things. For example, could FoL emails be going to your spam folder? The BT spam filter seems especially likely to identify group emails as spam. You can fix this by finding a FoL email and identifying it as 'not spam' and/or clicking on it and dragging it into your inbox.

A few other things may cause problems. For example, if you have a joint membership, FoL emails could be going to the other member, or perhaps you have changed your email recently. If either of these is an issue, we are always happy to update your communication preferences. It's also worth checking in case your inbox is too full to receive emails.

If you have any queries please contact Diana Wilkins, Membership Secretary at membership@friends-of-lewes.org.uk

Keeping you in the 'Loop' *from Jane Slater*

One of the 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 membership secretary, Diana Wilkins via email [-membership@friends-of-lewes.org.uk](mailto:membership@friends-of-lewes.org.uk)

Friends of Lewes Coffee Time Talks to be held by Zoom in September and December 2022

**Friends of Lewes Members 'Coffee Time Talk on Zoom,
Tuesday 20 September 2022, 10:30am
*Audrey Jarvis: Supporting Swifts in Lewes***

Lewes Swift Supporters (LSS) are a group of volunteers who are determined to work with Lewes residents to reverse the decline in numbers of Swifts in Lewes.



A swift, photo by Barry Griffin

Lewes has always been an important town for these fascinating summer visitors, with an estimated 10% of the Sussex Swifts nesting here. However, with their numbers dropping by 58% since 1995, they are now on the red list of birds of conservation concern.

From the end of April to mid-August, LSS monitor the behaviour of Swifts and record their nesting sites. They use this information to help to expand existing colonies and in this talk by Audrey Jarvis, LSS Secretary, you may find out ways in which you can help these wonderful birds!

**Then on Tuesday the 6th of December our
Zoom Coffee Time Talk at 10.30am will be given by our
Membership Secretary, Di Wilkins.**

Di has recently been giving a series of talks on exploring the results of the 1921 census which have been released in full this year. The title of her talk is:

"How to use the 1921 census to explore your family history"

If you use the link below you can see some of the previous talks recorded on the StrikeALight YouTube channel:

<https://strikealight.org/sussex-1921-research-resources-and-case-studies-free-webinar/>

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