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The Leamington Society

Newsletter

August 2017

Chairman's Notes

Eventually . . . a new Local Plan for Warwick District

A press release on 2nd August tells us the welcome news that the Inspector has finally approved the modified Local Plan. This is scheduled for adoption at a Council meeting on 20th September.

The Inspector's Report starts with a one page "Non-Technical Summary" of the main modifications. The headline is that the housing requirement will average 932 per year, a total of 16,776 over the period 2011 to 2029. The Plan is deemed to have started in 2011 (yes!). Which means that since there was an average of 600 a year so far, the Plan proposes 1,098 a year onwards to 2029.

These extra numbers include an average of 332 a year to provide for unmet needs in Coventry. So it is logical that extra growth required will be allocated to the southern edge of Coventry, in addition to the many existing sites adjoining Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth. Not that this has been welcomed by WDC residents to the south of Coventry! As far as Leamington goes, it is noted that Red House Farm, Lillington was ruled out as a new housing site by the Inspector.

Five Pillars at the Pump Rooms

"Food & Drink, Art, History, Literature, Information" are proposed as the five pillars of the Pump Rooms "brand" in a report to the recent WDC Executive. What this grand statement tells us is that the essential elements of the Pump Rooms will remain in place, albeit with some front of house dressing up to attract more visitors.

A survey noted that footfall divided between 46% visiting the library, 30% entering the museum and gallery, and 24% going to the visitor information centre (VIC) or the café. It is particularly good news that WDC now accepts the library should remain in this key civic building. The main thrust of the report was to recommend that the concourse be rearranged with a joint service desk and displays to welcome and alert visitors to all aspects of the Pump Rooms. This would include moving the

Talks and events

Bernard Spilsbury

First Forensic Scientist

Christopher Hilton

Thursday, September 14th, 7.30
Conference Centre, Dormer Place

Guide Dogs: our local charity

Carrie Terry and Robert Jinks

Thursday, October 12th, 7.30

Conference Centre, Dormer Place

Railway Talk

36 years on the

Best Railway in the World

Chris Gibb

Thursday, October 26th, 6.30 pm

Conference Centre, Dormer Place

Warwickshire: the new Pevsner Guide

Chris Pickford, Author

Tuesday, November 7th

Conference Centre, Dormer Place, 7.30

The full calendar of events for
2017-18 is included with this
Newsletter

real contribution to our towns.

Bodies such as the Leamington Society are important to keep our elected authorities in check and the Society has a good record on this. So it is with relish that I look forward to continuing my long relationship with the Society both as member and as the Member.

Thank you.

Matt Western

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Tribute to our outgoing MP – Chris White

There is, or should be, a limit to cynicism. It is all very well to deride politicians and accuse them of making empty promises. It is the way that we, as individuals, protect ourselves against the power of government, and admittedly, preferable to submitting to it.

However, we need government and therefore we need politicians, and we are fortunate too in living in a country where politicians are largely honest and anxious to serve.

Part politics aside, and those tiresome people who find fault with everyone and everything, I think I am not far wrong if I say that the great majority of Chris White’s former constituents would agree that he was an exceptionally conscientious MP.

We might care to remember in particular two things.

Some years ago when Members of Parliament, wholly in compliance with the rules, gave themselves a pay-rise, he refused it for himself, instead employing it to create the charity “Love Leamington”. And at least three times, following his conscience, he had the guts to vote against his own party, no doubt to the fury of the Whips but compelling the admiration of independent minds even if they deplored his opinion (as I once did).

Robin Taylor

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Blue Plaques 2017

A couple of weeks ago, on a very well attended afternoon, two more of these attractive plaques were installed, the 28th and 29th. One was to John Cundall, the architect of St John’s and St Paul’s, each a first class example of Victorian Gothic; and of the Town Hall, with its beautiful clock-tower and Assembly Room and its characteristically eccentric and thoroughly Victorian façade that to some is vulgar, to me full of vigour and good humour.

The other was to Squadron Leader Henry Maudsley, bomber pilot in the Second World War; valiant patriot, quiet, determined, unassuming, competent; who on leaving school at 18 immediately volunteered for the RAF although he was not so foolish as to be unaware of the dangers; and who flew forty six missions against the Nazis, notably in the Dambusters’ raid of May 1943 as a result of which he died aged 21.

I must say that it is satisfying to be able to honour so many and so varied a set of people.

Robin Taylor

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Graham White 1937-2017

After retiring from teaching French at Kingsley School, Graham regularly lectured on art and architecture in Britain and Europe. These courses were very popular.

In 1975 Graham and his wife Marian settled in Leamington Spa, where they joined the Leamington Society, the National Trust supporter group and Friends of Leamington Art Gallery (FLAG). Graham joined the FLAG committee and later becoming Chairman. He was an excellent Chairman: we could always hear what he said; he was always relaxed and polite and ensured that everyone felt able to have their say, yet somehow he managed to prevent any acrimony, not an easy task. He also ensured that the meeting closed on time.

Graham was an excellent organiser of outings and holidays for the local NT and FLAG. Many members of these societies have lovely memories of holidays in Bruges, Rouen and several in Britain: Glasgow, Edinburgh and, naturally, at Betty's Tea Rooms in Yorkshire. One outing which I particularly remember was our visit to Leicester to see Richard III's tomb.

Graham will be greatly missed in the town and by many Leamington Society members.

Margaret Watkins

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Art in the Park, 2017

Congratulations to Carole Sleight and her countless volunteers for another hugely successful Art in the Park event in Jephson Gardens this year, attracting thousands of visitors to see displays of local art work and musical performances.

There were many opportunities to engage in activities as well as buy some fine examples of local artists. The theme



Trombonists giving their all

for this year's Art in the Park was Leamington's legendary three elephants Wilhelmina, Haddie and Trilby. Children and adults were able to decorate models of these.



A treat for this young girl

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The Ballad of Platform 2

His train was broken, hers was delayed
Strangers sat on the caff bench both slightly dismayed
Rolling their eyes in mutual disgust
Until those eyes met and there was a tingle of lust...

They started talking about Great Western
The delays and the track works that sometimes stressed them
He thought at first sight 'Gosh, you're all that'
And she thought 'How lovely, this man likes a chat'

Taking advantage of their annoying delay
He boldly decided to seize the day
He proffered his number if she fancied a coffee
She accepted and smiled but thought 'not for toffee'

But as time went by the tall, silver stranger
Popped into her head and she thought she'd arrange a
Drink with the man who'd taken a chance
What was the worst that could happen, romance?

Well the double-shot latte of love hit its target
Their passion ignited and a relationship started
Quickly they realized and said 'I love you'
And four years later they returned to Platform 2

She sat on the bench, he got down on one knee
And asked her: "Jo will you marry me?"
She accepted, delighted, and so we are near
The wedding on June 23rd this year

It's not on this platform (they don't serve Champagne)
But its role, we felt, should be marked all the same
So, Jo and Dave, here's to happy ever after
To dog walks and red wine and lots of laughter
You're the perfect couple and we'll always love you
From your adoring friends and of course Platform 2

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The Leamington Society is a registered charity. It is a member of the West Midlands Amenity Societies Association and the National Organisation of Residents' Associations. It exists to preserve the heritage and improve the character of Royal Leamington Spa and to encourage high standards of planning and architecture
Charity No. 516078

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