



www.leamingtonsociety.org

The Leamington Society Newsletter

February 2020

Chairman's notes

Spring is in the air with snowdrops in Jephson Gardens and crocuses in Euston Place. All so welcome after such a damp winter – another sign of climate change?

Climate change is a topic that Warwick District Councillors of all parties are addressing. They are currently excited to be examining proposals to improve local resilience to climate change, and to reduce not only the Council's carbon footprint to zero by 2025 (!!), but also help the district to be carbon neutral by 2030.

This means some tough decisions to be made when the Council debates these proposals on February 26th. The proposals need funding, through our Council tax. The District Council is permitted to ask for an increase of £5 a year for Band D properties, to continue supporting services.

To put £3m per year into a 'ring-fenced' Climate Action Fund, Councillors will also be considering asking residents for an additional increase of £1 per week, for a Band D property, making a total increase of £57 a year. If approved at Council on 26th February this will mean holding a Referendum on 7 May, asking all residents to vote for or against this additional increase. This is an important decision for all local residents, and the District may well find itself at the centre of national interest, being the first local authority with such bold plans.

Talks and Events

Computer Games

Pip Burley
Thursday March 19th, 19.30

*Joint meeting with
the Warwick Society*

Cordelia Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey

Sheila Woolf
Thursday April 16th, 19.30

AGM

Thursday, May 14th, 19.00

Formal business, followed by
**Warwickshire Open Studios:
2020**

Don Mason

**All above events and talks
will take place at**

Conference Centre,
Dormer Place, CV32 5AA

It will be a hot topic of conversation, but please don't blame your Councillor if they appear to be sitting on the fence. If they are perceived to have predetermined their position before 26th February, they are ineligible to vote in the debate.

The Leamington Society will be watching the outcome with interest.

Sidney Syson

Forthcoming talks and events: For venues, dates and times see front page of this Newsletter

Computer Games

Pip Burley is a director of Leamington LAMP, an alternative education provider that specialises in working with young people with autism and/or high anxiety who struggle in mainstream education settings.

LAMP achieves awards for its educational work.

At LAMP Pip teaches Music and Computer games; he will talk to us about the second of these.

Cordelia Leigh of Stoneleigh Abbey

Sheila Woolf, recognized historian to Stoneleigh Abbey, will talk about Cordelia Leigh, youngest daughter of William Henry, Lord Leigh, of Stoneleigh Abbey, who lived from 1866 to 1956. Cordelia Leigh devoted her long life to education and became a champion of causes and an inspiration to many young people. Perhaps her greatest legacy is the work she did during the Great War, work revealed through her meticulously kept scrapbooks and diaries.

No charge

AGM and Warwickshire Open Studios: 2020

The Agenda for our AGM is at the final page of this newsletter.

Formal business will be followed by open discussion with wine, soft drinks, and light refreshments. Then Don Mason, chair of Warwickshire Open Studios, will tell us of its growth over 20 years.

NOTE CHANGE OF AGM VENUE TO DORMER PLACE CONFERENCE CENTRE

No charge

Subscription

Last year the Society experimented with a £2 annual premium for members who paid their subscription one year at a time rather than by standing order. Not surprisingly this was unpopular with these members. In addition the change did not save the work that the Society's membership secretary and treasurer had hoped. In short the experiment was unsuccessful; so we have decided to abolish the £2 surcharge.

Therefore, from April 2020, our membership subscription will be £15 for a household and £10 for a single person.

The Comyn Communities – enhancing Health and Wellbeing in Royal Leamington Spa

Communities and organisations that use or have an interest in aspects of Newbold Comyn have been identified and contacts made with individuals. Some aspects are:

1. Wildlife. Using part of the area to restore natural habitats and recover wildlife linking in the Leam Valley nature reserve, reversing the current low biodiversity and involving volunteer groups to assist with the process.



Leam Valley nature reserve

2. Sport and exercise. Providing support for walking, running and cycling groups and the many specialist services that help restore fitness to overcome conditions resulting from poor lifestyles and stress-related factors leading to poor mental health.
3. Physical and mental health therapies. Establishing facilities and activities to use these nature resources to overcome mental and physical conditions; working with local GP networks and social prescribing services to relieve the pressure on NHS consulting practices.
4. Social. Establishing a visitor centre, café and meeting spaces with outdoor areas to hold events for people using these new services and activities.
5. Information and education. Building an information service and learning centre for the community to meet and discuss issues relating to wildlife conservation and habitat restoration; how future foods and diets may be produced and developed; and how farming, rural practices and food supply chains will adapt.
6. Cooperation. Enlisting partners to support and provide backup services and events and bring in new commercial opportunities. Encouraging new communities to promote renewable energy sources; clean water supplies; air purification techniques along with improving waste management and recycling.

Such Comyn Communities would make Royal Leamington Spa a Centre for Health and Wellbeing and the Spa town for the 21st Century.

The next stage is to form an association to bring these Communities together to represent their common goals.

Michael Bunney

Leamington to Kenilworth Cycle Route K2L

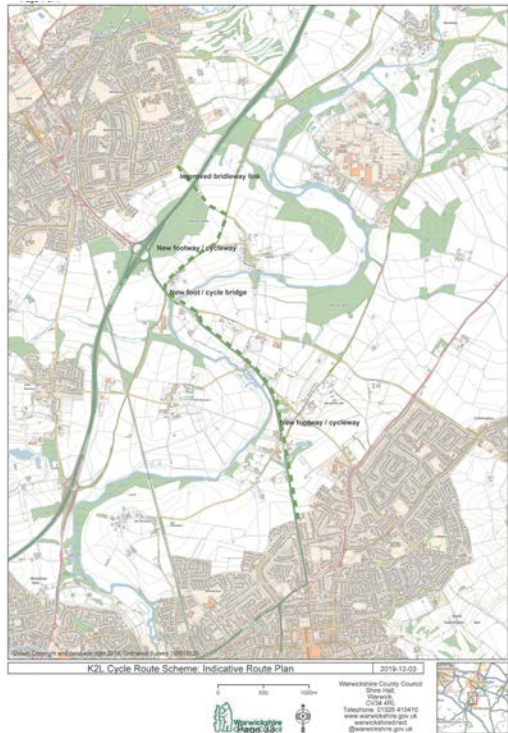
WCC's decision to invest £4.75m in a new cycle route known as K2L between Kenilworth and Leamington marks a significant start to addressing the problems created by motor traffic:

- Poor air quality is a serious issue in all three towns within Warwick District.
- Sedentary lifestyles and lack of physical activity has now become a major health threat, one much greater than air pollution.

- Climate Change: Vehicle emissions constitute a significant proportion of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. Both WCC and WDC have declared a Climate Emergency.

These factors all lead us to invest in a zero carbon and healthy mode of transport – cycling.

The route will be from the north end of Kenilworth Road in Leamington, across the River Avon to the Ashow Road. It then turns right to Rocky Lane, then left over the A46 to Glasshouse Lane. From there, cycle routes can, at a future date, be created to Warwick University, JLR at Whitley, and the planned new developments at Kings Hill (with 4,000 new homes), Stoneleigh Park, and Coventry. These large developments underpin the economic case for building the new cycle bridge over the River Avon.



Cycle route - dashed line

In addition, a direct route into Kenilworth is planned alongside the A452 from the Ashow Road, across the Thickthorn roundabout, then alongside the Leamington Road to the Jet petrol station roundabout. This will depend on the new housing development planned adjacent to the north of the Thickthorn roundabout.

The K2L scheme has attracted strong public support with a petition of over 3,000 signatures.

To see the route online click [here](#).

Rodney King

Leamington Society Architectural Awards 2020

This year is a Leamington Society Awards year so we would like you all to think of any Leamington projects, completed since April 2018, that have impressed you and have contributed to the environment of Leamington Spa. These can be a restoration, conversion or enhancement of an existing building, a new build or landscape work, as long as it is visible to the public.

Nominations must be submitted by 19th April 2020. Nomination Forms can be found on the Leamington Society website at <https://leamingtonsociety.org/society-awards-2020/>. Forms will also be available from the Town Hall reception, the Visitor Centre at the Pump Rooms and the Warwick District Council offices at Riverside House, Milverton Hill. Completed forms should be sent by post to

Richard Ward, 3 Bell Court, The Maltings, Leamington Spa, CV32 5FH

or by email to

RichardWard404@googlemail.com.

The Awards are a way for the Leamington Society to celebrate the quality of the town whilst incidentally giving us some publicity. Some 2018 Award winners:



Russell Terrace



Bath Street

And two new developments close to town centre maximising the use of land



Rugby Road

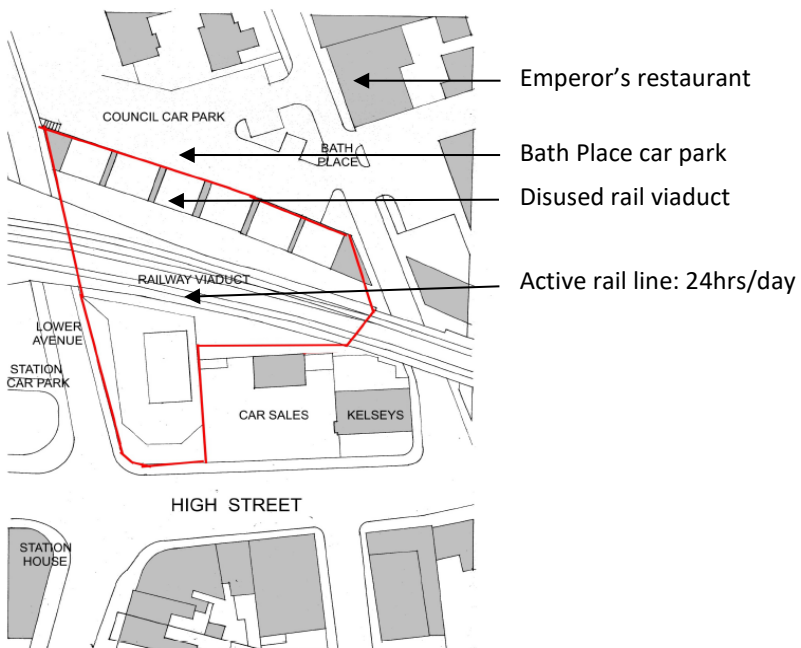


Tachbrook Road

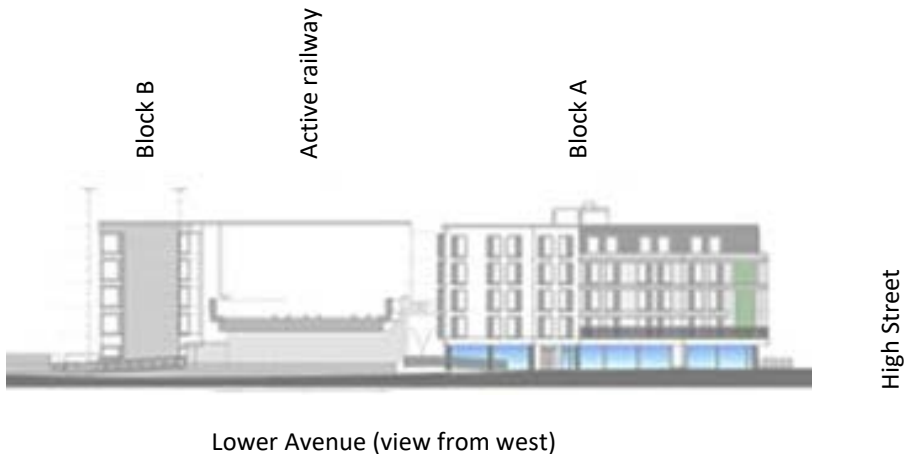
Richard Ward

Another PBSA adjacent to Leamington Station

Our previous newsletter anticipated another PBSA (Purpose Built Student Accommodation) in Old Town. An application (W/19/2077) for this has now been submitted. This proposes two blocks (A and B) of five floors providing 182 student rooms above retail units and a gym at ground level. It will require the demolition of



the disused railway viaduct adjacent to Bath Place car park. Block A will be built immediately south of the existing operational viaduct and block B on the site of the demolished viaduct.



Block A, on the corner of Lower Avenue and High Street, is about 15 metres (50 feet) high with mechanical plant on the roof. Block B is the same height. The development would displace all existing workshops in the arches under the active railway line.

Leamington Town Council objected, citing concerns on many aspects of the application: lack of parking for the new businesses; displacement of existing small independent businesses; the poor air quality in the vicinity; the mass of the development, and interrupting key local views of All Saints' Church grade II* tower; intrusion on All Saints House in Bath Place (which accommodates adults with learning and/or physical disabilities). It is also contrary to Leamington's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

The Waste Management section of WDC object to the application on the grounds of inadequate provision for waste disposal, and the potential difficulty of waste collection vehicles stopping in the busy Lower Avenue.

CAF (The Conservation Advisory Forum of WDC) expressed a strong wish to see the existing railway arches retained, arguing these reflect the industrial heritage of the area whilst also providing sites for smaller businesses. CAF felt that the proposals

would have a destructive effect on the historic urban form, blocking important views to the All Saints' Parish Church to the north.

Public Health at Warwickshire County Council strongly object to the proposal on the grounds of that it would worsen air and noise quality in an already badly polluted area; the windows in the students' rooms cannot be opened. The Landscape Team at WCC observe that the proposed development contravenes Layout and Design, Landscape policies of the Local Plan as well as the NPPF.

During the first month the application was open for comment there were over 125 objections from members of the public, reflecting many of the above concerns.

Altogether a thorough thumbs down by the residents of the town and their councils.

Archie Pitts

Kit de Waal

Kit de Waal gave an honest and humorous interview to a packed audience. She was born in Birmingham to a Caribbean father and Irish mother who was a childminder and foster carer. As a child she read little because there were no books in the house, only her mother's Jehovah's Witness Bible and her father's 'News of the World'. Kit worked for 15 years in criminal/family law, was a magistrate and sat on adoption panels. 'I voluntarily read my first novel when I was 22 – *Riotous Assembly* by Tom Sharpe and after that I spent my 20s and 30s working through the classics'.

Her best-selling debut novel 'My name Is Leon' is a moving and thought-provoking novel told through an 8-year-old child who becomes a foster child. This won the prestigious Desmond Elliott literary prize in 2017. Her second novel 'Trick to Time' was driven by her history and desire to describe her mother's generation moving here from Ireland. It is an unforgettable tale of grief, longing and a lifelong love.

Kit has since promoted support for working class writers and admitted 'I'm very happy to be looked upon as an activist and freedom fighter, but it's absolutely accidental. I'm not that nice and selfless'.

I disagree. Her writing has received numerous awards. We look forward to seeing what her pen wields in 2020.

Carole Sleight

Barry Franklin: Go Shopping: Clemens Street to the Parade

Barry is a walking compendium of Leamington's commercial history due to his professional work valuing properties. He has a good eye for detail and has assembled a large collection of old photographs as evidence of the ephemeral. Did you know that even Marks and Spencer's has occupied three separate addresses on the Parade? Me neither. And they now have permission to rebuild on the Shires – bad news for most of us.

For decades, there were abundant grocers, butchers, bakers, tailors, shoe shops and almost extinct shops (greengrocers, tobacconists, furriers) along the central avenue of Leamington Spa:

Parade - Victoria Terrace - Bath Street - Clemens Street, many with awnings and staff in immaculate white overalls, not to mention the big stores: Burgess & Colbourne, Bobby's, Woodward's, Frances We now live with an abundance of coffee bars, hairdressers, nail bars and charity shops – and the buildings are reverting to residences, which is what they were built for two centuries ago.



Looking north in Bath Street.

Compare to present day photo, p.6

An entertaining and thought-provoking talk.

Marianne Pitts

New members

We are pleased to welcome to our society:

Matt Fattorini

Graham and Pauline Luckraft

Mrs Valerie Grimmer

Mrs Helen Knee

Nigel and Juliette Robinson

Officers and Committee

Chairman: Sidney Syson, 11 Astley Close, CV32 6PT, 01926 423 140

Vice Chairmen: Barbara Lynn, Apt. 53 Manor House, Avenue Road, CV31 3ND
01926 831 414

Richard Ward, 3 Bell Court, The Maltings, CV32 5FH, 01926 422 750

Hon. Secretary: Margaret Begg, The Garden House, Clarendon Crescent, CV32 5NR,
01926 423 822

Hon. Treasurer: Marianne Pitts, 7 Kineton Hall, Lillington Avenue, CV32 5DR,
01926 885 532

Other Committee Members:

Richard Ashworth	01926 316 703	Clive Engwell	01926 420 454
------------------	---------------	---------------	---------------

Archie Pitts	01926 885 532	Carole Sleight	07768 617 081
--------------	---------------	----------------	---------------

Jef Tuyn	01926 339 085		
----------	---------------	--	--

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

Unless otherwise indicated, views expressed in these newsletters are the contributors' own and not necessarily the corporate view of the Society.



February 2020

Notice is hereby given that the **Annual General Meeting** of the Leamington Society for 2019 will be held on **Thursday, 14th May, starting at 7.00, at Dormer Place Conference Centre.**

Sidney Syson, Chairman

NOTE CHANGE OF AGM VENUE FROM THAT ADVERTISED ON PROGRAMME CARD

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 9th May 2019
3. Matters arising from the Minutes not included elsewhere
4. To receive reports from the Chairman and Sub Committees
5. To receive the independently examined Accounts of the Society for 2019-20
6. Election of Officers:
Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer
7. Election of four Committee Members
8. Election of Independent Examiner for 2020-21
9. Any other Business

PLEASE NOTE: **Nominations** of candidates for Officers and Committee must be forwarded to the **Chairman not later than Thursday, 23rd April 2020**. Any voting will be by Secret Ballot at the Meeting. **Nominations for the committee are welcomed.**

Any motions for consideration at the meeting should also be received by this date. Nominations or motions will **not** be accepted at the Meeting. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Chairman.

If there is to be an election or if any motion is received, notice will be sent to members seven days before the Annual General Meeting.

Following the formal business of the AGM we will break for refreshments after which Don Mason will talk about the first 20 years of the **Warwickshire Open Studios**.