



HENLEY SOCIETY SUMMER 2011 NEWSLETTER

Editor: Sandra Moon

OUR AGM for 2011 was held in the Chantry House on Friday 1st April at 7pm presided over by our Vice President, Lord Phillimore and was well attended. On completion of the agenda, the meeting was addressed by



John Lockwood, a noted town planner and urban designer. He gave a stimulating and illustrated talk on "Conservation through the Management of Change". He stressed the importance of shop-front design in maintaining the character of Conservation Areas and showed examples of good and, especially, poor design in Henley and in other towns. Among other points, he recommended that the Society, including its individual members, should put pressure on the local planning authority to make more use of

"Article 4 Directions" to control developments in the designated Conservation Areas.

Report by the Chairman of the Planning Committee to the AGM, April 2011

Every year the District Council receives about 250 to 300 planning applications relating to Henley; and the Society's planning committee aims to look at all of these and to comment where we think it's appropriate. At least two thirds of the applications go through without comment; but, when we do respond, the comment may be an outright objection or it may be a suggestion for modification or it may, occasionally, be a commendation.

In deciding on our comments, we have in mind three objectives set out in the Society's leaflet. To remind you, these are:

1. The conservation and enhancement of the town, its waterfront and its setting.
2. The preservation of the town's historical centre, its fine approaches and its trees.
3. An appropriate balance between housing and the provision of employment, shopping and leisure facilities.

Overall, we attempt to retain Henley's character as a viable market town. The attractions of market towns are well known and were summed up recently by one of the national directors of Savills, the estate agents, when he said in an interview: "The thing about market towns is that they have all the facilities, shops and restaurants, but they also have a more villagey feel than more modern towns or bland suburbs. And this sort of appeal is self-perpetuating. People who live there take care of their property and can sustain the delis and good shops,

and this makes them more desirable places”.

But as the writer Clive Aslett has said “Market towns have to be fought for”.

This brings us back to the local situation and South Oxfordshire District Council’s Core Strategy, a strategy that will provide the framework for planning decisions in the period up to 2025. This strategy has been in preparation since 2007 and has been through various public consultations, though generally without much publicity. The final consultation took place a few months ago with a closing date at the end of January. However, despite these consultations, and responses from interested parties including ourselves, we question whether the people who have compiled the strategy document are sufficiently familiar with Henley as it currently exists. I will quote just a couple of brief extracts from the latest version.

First: “SODC strategy is therefore to identify land for about 400 homes on a number of small sites within and adjacent to the town”. Second: “The study indicates that Henley would benefit from an improved range of bars, restaurants and cafes”. I’ll leave you to decide whether these statements are realistic. The Core Strategy has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for Local Government and will be subject to scrutiny by a government inspector before being formally adopted early next year.

Perhaps now I should mention three planning applications which have the potential to have a significant impact on the town. They have all been reported on at some time in the Henley Standard but some members may not be familiar with them.

The first one is the Market Place Mews development, for which the original 3-year consent ran out in December. However the developers applied for and received approval to go ahead with the same plans during the next three year period. So work could start at any time, though presumably the developers will be taking the economic outlook into account before starting.

The second application was one by Henley College to build a large new sports facility, for themselves and other organisations, on their playing field at the end of Tilebarn Close and at the entrance to the attractive Hernes Valley. As you may have seen in the Henley Standard, this application has now been refused by SODC but it could, of course, come back in a modified form at a later date.

The third application concerns the triangular green at the end of Bell St, between Rupert House School and the junction with the Marlow Road, where a property company has recently submitted a planning application to extend what they claim are 9 existing parking spaces on and around the green. It would involve a substantial reduction in the area of the green and the felling of three trees, as well as allocating part of the highway behind the green to private parking spaces. We have objected to this application but no decision has yet been taken.

Finally I would like to thank the other members of the committee for their participation; and the Town Council for making available to us their copies of the plans for the various applications.

I have to apologies but there was an error in the printing of the accounts that were sent out to you, if you would like a corrected copy please let me know on 01491 573887.

The AGM was followed by drinks downstairs where members could talk to the Committee informally and a good time was had by all.



Ian Giuliani, Lord Phillimore & Geoffrey Probert



Melba Pitt



Pauline Fleming, Nora Scanlon & Julie Perigo with Victor Britton



Errol Facy, Jean Dowse and Gwyther Boardman



Apsley House & Kensington Palace. On 10th March 38 Members spent a very exhausting day visiting Apsley House and Kensington Palace. Unfortunately because of the parking restrictions in London quite a lot of walking was involved. We began our visit at Apsley House which was very interesting and gave us an insight into the life and battles of the Duke of Wellington. Our day then followed with a lunch break in the area of Kensington Palace. Whilst the weather was fine for walking in Kensington Gardens it was felt by all the members that the exhibition in Kensington Palace was bizarre and disappointing. We finally arrived back in Henley at 6pm.



Kew Palace & Gardens. Our next outing will be on 17th May when we will visit Kew Palace and Kew Gardens. We are planning to leave Henley at 9.30 am and on arrival in Kew you will be issued with tickets admitting you to both the Gardens and the Palace. You will then be free to enjoy your day at leisure with weather permitting perhaps a picnic

in the Gardens or at the numerous eating venues within the grounds which during May should be at their most attractive. We expect to leave for Henley at 4.30 p.m. A hop on hop off train for the less agile is available!

Highgrove. On 3rd August is our long anticipated visit to the gardens at Highgrove. In view of the number of places available booking will be limited to MEMBERS ONLY and places will be allotted on a first come basis. It should be noted that the tour covers two miles of gardens, and is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. Following the tour of Highgrove us into Tetbury where we will have lunch and also explore the town.



some on unmade paths
our coach will transport
have the opportunity to
interesting shops within

Booking forms for the above outings will be included with this Newsletter and should be returned to Sandra Moon by the due booking date.

A note for your diary is 8th May 2012 when we will be visiting Highclere Castle. Nothing like looking ahead.

We are going to hold a public meeting in the Autumn with a talk on the Localism Bill given by our own MP John Howell.

Committee

Your Committee for the ensuing year is:

Errol Facy – Chairman

Nora Scanlon – Hon Secretary 01491 579619

Sandra Moon - Hon Treasurer & Membership Secretary 01491 573887

David Whitehead – Chairman of Planning Sub Committee

Bernard Brook-Partridge

Jenifer Copeland

Pauline Fleming – Events Organiser

Ian Giuliani

Julie Perigo

Nic Rutherford

New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following as new members of the Society:- Mr Victor Britton, Mrs Joan Facy, Mr Ian Gardiner, Mr Peter Long, Sir David & Lady Jo Thompson and Mr John Twort.

We were very sorry learn of the death of John Hicks, who joined the Society in 1993 and was on the Executive Committee between 1999-2005.

The Society welcomes new members and you are encouraged to invite your friends and neighbours to join.