



Charity No 2324205

# HENLEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

## October 2015

Editor: Sandra Moon

[www.thehenleysociety.ctc-aspire.co.uk](http://www.thehenleysociety.ctc-aspire.co.uk)

### Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 24th November - Lecture Ian Giuliani at The Barn details below

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Lunch at Badgemore Golf Club details attached

Tuesday 23rd February 2016 at 7pm in the Barn - Lecture by historian Simon Townley

May 2016 - Visit to Hinton Ampner ( date to be advised)

### Lecture - Henley Through Time by Ian Giuliani on Tuesday 24th November at the Barn at 7pm

What started as a lively debate in Committee about aesthetics of building applications came an offer by our Vice-Chairman, Ian Giuliani to give a talk entitled "Building for our Time". Do come and support him and hear what one of our local architects has to say about buildings of the 20th century versus tradition built buildings.

### Christmas Lunch - Saturday 5th December at Badgemore Golf Club

Once again we are holding our popular Christmas lunch at Badgemore. Please find attached the application form. Non-members welcome. We intend to have a raffle and a quiz. If you would like to donate something to it please let Pauline know in advance.

### The outing to Strawberry Hill on 26th May.



In May twenty-six of our members enjoyed one of our most successful outings to Strawberry Hill, Twickenham which was created by Horace Walpole in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and re-opened in 2010 after a £9 million restoration. After a traffic free journey we were greeted with coffee and biscuits and then divided into two groups for a tour of the house. Both groups had excellent guides for the ninety minute tour and although we initially had reservations that

the rooms were not furnished this the history of the painted glass coverings. Following a tasty lunch to sit in the sun and enjoy the before leaving for a trouble free



allowed us to take in all windows and wall we had an opportunity grounds of the house journey home.



### AGM on March 27th



Our Annual General Meeting took place on March 27th at Sacred Heart Hall. It was a disappointing turn out of members, as this is your chance to let the committee know your feelings on the various activities that affect Henley. Please

find below the Chairman's and Planning Committees Report below.

## Chairman's Report

My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen

The neighbourhood plan was the subject at last year's AGM talk given by Matthew Kinghan, who is lead consultant for Nexus planning, and we are pleased to welcome him back for this year's AGM talk. To my knowledge the Henley Society has never had the same speaker for two consecutive years but I believe that interest in the neighbourhood plan is such that a return visit is more than justified.

As you will hear in the Treasurers report the Society is financially sound. And membership is currently a little under 300 members.

The principal activity of the Society is the Planning section under the excellent chairmanship of David Whitehead and his committed team who examine in the region of over 300 planning applications in the Town during the Year. Making sound recommendations to both Town and most importantly South Oxfordshire District Council.



In June a number of members visited Kenwood House built in the 16th century and remodelled in the 18th century by Robert Adams. The group then travelled to nearby Bentley Priory former home to the Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain, The Grade 2 listed building had been the subject of a 14 million restoration and members were able to examine the many historical documents of the era together with an excellent tour.

During November we had an interest Lecture on Henley through time by Elizabeth Hazeldine in the Historic Town centre Barn.

December saw the Annual Christmas Lunch at Badgemore and this has been booked again for this December. Our thanks to Pauline Fleming for organizing the Social events.

The next outside event is a trip to Strawberry Hill. Horace Walpole's newly restored Gothic Castle with a conducted tour and two course lunch on 26th May.

Thanks are due to the Officers and Committee for their time and effort during the year.

## Report of the Henley Society Planning Committee, AGM, March 2015

The Planning Committee has met on 17 occasions since the last AGM and has dealt with a total of 273 planning applications, which is a similar number to the previous year. There was also a joint meeting of the Executive and Planning Committees to discuss the Society's response to the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan. For those who are interested, our comments on planning applications are put on the Society's website soon after each meeting.

So what has actually been happening in terms of planning during the year? One feature has been the contrast between major and minor developments. In terms of major developments, with more than 4-5 houses on one site, there has been little change during the year. On the other hand, minor developments, particularly house extensions and new-builds on infill sites, have been going ahead at what seems to be an unprecedented rate. Major developments have been held back partly through developers waiting for the outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is now expected to be adopted at about the end of this year. However, not all developers are waiting patiently. There have been attempts during the year to either pre-empt the Neighbourhood Plan or at least to force the pace.

The first application trying to pre-empt the Plan was for 110 houses to be built at Thames Farm between Henley and Shiplake. There were many objections to this proposal and it was duly refused by SODC, but it has since gone to appeal to be decided by a government inspector; and the outcome of this should be announced within the next few weeks. I think the appeal is unlikely to succeed but if it does it will make a mockery of the Neighbourhood Plan process and the government's Localism agenda. [The Appeal did not succeed, though the inspector stated that he attached little importance to the draft Neighbourhood Plan as it had not yet been adopted].

The second application is rather different in that it relates to a site that has been included in all the drafts of the Neighbourhood Plan and is relatively uncontroversial. It is for 55 dwellings, mainly flats, on the site of the old Jet Garage and the surrounding land. However the question is whether the development should be approved in advance of the Neighbourhood Plan being formally adopted. We responded to this application by saying that we agreed with the development in principle; but that it should be approved at this stage only if there was a firm guarantee that it would count towards the 450 houses allocated to Henley. SODC's decision on this application for the Jet garage site has not yet been announced. [Still not announced at the end of July].

There may well be another attempt to pre-empt the Neighbourhood Plan as Bloor Homes who want to build on Drawback Hill at Lucy's Farm have said that they intend to submit a planning application. However, according to SODC, they have not yet done so. The area at Drawback Hill has definitely not been recommended for development and, as with Thames Farm, if such an application were to be approved, it would run counter to the whole concept of Neighbourhood Planning.

In addition to the Neighbourhood Plan, another factor that may possibly have held back a major development is the collapse of the company, London and Henley Properties. This company owned the Market Place mews area around the alleyway between the Kings Road carpark and the Market Place, and had permission for a major redevelopment there. However, the land and buildings are now expected to be sold by the administrators, and the buyers will then acquire the planning permission. Whether they will go ahead with the scheme approved in 2007 is doubtful: they will probably come up with a revised scheme. And this, we hope, will be more sympathetic than the current scheme to the character of the town.

In relation to minor planning developments, SODC has granted permission to the great majority of applications, though they have sometimes insisted on modifications to reduce the impact on the immediate neighbours. This policy of granting permission whenever possible has reflected the relaxation of the government's planning guidelines in recent years; and the results have become fairly obvious: large numbers of skips around the town, trees being felled and single houses being demolished and replaced by 2 or 3 on the same plot. Individually each minor development may have little impact on the ambience of the town but cumulatively they are certainly changing the appearance of a number of residential roads. For example, many extensions have reduced the spaces between neighbouring properties and in some cases have been combined with the conversion of front gardens into paved or gravelled car-parking areas. And new-builds on infill sites inevitably have much smaller gardens than the surrounding properties.

I've mentioned the Neighbourhood Plan several times and, as you know, this has progressed through various stages during the year. Matthew Kinghan will bring us up to date on this.

However, there is now a further threat to Henley and its surroundings that I should mention. The Neighbourhood Plan is based on the SODC Core Strategy which runs up to 2027, just 12 years away. And this specified that 11,500 new dwellings should be built in South Oxfordshire before that date, with 450 allocated to Henley. But SODC is now preparing a new Local Plan to take in the next 4 years up to 2031, in which it is proposing a further 3600 dwellings in addition to 11,500, plus yet more in a probable overspill from Oxford. There is at present a consultation on this new Plan that closes next Thursday, 2 April, and you can respond to this on the SODC website by following the links to South Oxfordshire

Local Plan 2031. I would encourage you to do so.

[Update on the Neighbourhood Plan - a Final Submission Version dated June 2015 has been submitted to SODC for their approval and to ensure that the recommendations in the Plan comply with the Core Strategy. It is envisaged that recommendations from the current Transport Study will be included or at least referenced in the Plan before it is put to the referendum.]

David Whitehead

### **New Members**

I would like to welcome the following as members : Roderick Whitlock, Karen Wade, Jill Allen and Eva D'Souza.

### **Where Are You?**

Does anyone know where Pamela Hodgson formerly of Sonning Common is? If you know where she has moved to please let Sandra Moon on 01491 573887 know. Thank You

### **Committee**

Errol Facy - Chairman

Ian Giuliani - Vice Chairman

Nora Scanlon - Hon Secretary 01491 579619

Sandra Moon - Hon Treasurer & Membership Secretary 01491 573887

David Whitehead - Chairman of Planning Sub Committee

Jenifer Copeland, Pauline Fleming - Events Organiser, Valerie Alasia and Emma Abbott

#### ***President***

**H.R.H. The Duke of Kent KG GCMG GCVO**

#### ***Vice Presidents***

**The Lord Camoys GCVO DL Sir Martyn Arbib The Baroness Buscombe of Goring The Lord Phillimore of Shiplake**