



Charity No 2324205

# HENLEY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2016

Editor: Sandra Moon

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

## Dates for your diary:

**Monday 14th November 2016 - Lecture by Dieter Hinke in the Barn at 7pm**



### **Henley, the Neighbourhood Plan and the future role of The Henley Society**

A discussion open to members and all those interested in Henley

Guest Speaker: Mr Dieter Hinke ex-chairman of the Town Council's planning committee and is now chairman of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Neighbourhood Plan is promoted as the way forward for the future development of Henley. The Henley Society has evolved into a civic body which looks to maintain a high quality physical environment for Henley. Dieter Hinke who as a Town Councillor chaired the Neighbourhood Plan formation process and now is the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, which is tasked with implementing the plan, has kindly offered to be the key speaker of the evening. The aim of the evening is to enable members and guests of the Henley Society to understand more about the plan and its impact on Henley and very importantly to review the role of the Henley Society into the future. Therefore please bring any ideas you might have about what more the Henley Society can do for Henley - and perhaps you might even be encouraged to become involved with the Society's Planning Committee.

The evening is informal and refreshments will be available

This is open to members and non-members.

**Saturday 3rd December - Christmas Lunch at Red Lion Hotel** (application form enclosed)

Please note new venue. This is open to members and their guests

Henley AGM on Friday 8th April

Our AGM was held on 8th April at the Sacred Heart Hall. It was attended by about 30 members.

Errol Facy gave his report and then suddenly announced that he was not standing again for election which has sadly left the Society with NO Chairman this year. We would like to thank him for his contribution for the last six years - five of them as Chairman

## **Report of the Henley Society Planning Committee to the AGM, 8 April 2016 by David Whitehead**

The Society's planning committee has had another busy year with a total of 286 planning applications coming forward for consideration. As usual most of the applications were for house extensions of various types: side extensions, loft conversions, garage conversions and in one case the enlargement of a basement. There were also several applications for new houses in garden spaces, sometimes involving the demolition of an existing house and its replacement by 2 or 3 new ones. Nearly all of these applications for extensions and infill building were approved by SODC despite our view, in some cases, that they would constitute over-development or would be unneighbourly.

The past year has also seen a revised application for Townlands - not for the hospital itself but the developments associated with it. NHS Property Services already have planning permission for 45 dwellings, 34 of them for sheltered housing units and the remainder ostensibly for staff accommodation. The latest plans have included an underground car park, which is a positive change, but at the same time they appear to have introduced a rather unsightly block of housing which will be out of character with the nearby listed buildings of the old workhouse.

You will all know that the Henley/Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan has reached its final stages, with the referendum on 10 March resulting in a 4 to 1 majority in favour of the Plan but on a rather low turnout of 28%. Despite the size of the majority, I suspect that many of the people who voted in favour of the plan did so somewhat reluctantly, not actually welcoming the Plan but having come to the conclusion that it was preferable to the alternative of having no plan at all. The only stage still outstanding is confirmation of the Plan by SODC. Certainly the criteria that the Plan had to meet were changed during the time that it's been in preparation. You may remember that when the process was started in 2012 we were told that the town had to accommodate at least 400 new dwellings; and there were concerns then about the impact of this number, particularly on traffic congestion and parking. But by the end of the process the designated number had been increased substantially. Firstly a government inspector increased the number to 450 dwellings; and then the examiner of the final draft effectively increased it again to 500; and 500 was the number in the referendum version. These 500 homes are additional to the housing at the Townlands site and also additional to those that are likely to be built in the Market Place Mews development. Both of these developments, Townlands and Market Place Mews, were excluded from the Plan because they had been approved in principle before the Plan was started.

Although the Plan has only just passed the referendum stage, two applications for sites supported by the NP have already been submitted to SODC. One of them, for 55 apartments on the site of the old Jet Garage on Reading Road, has actually been approved but, despite this, the site has now been sold on. And the new owners, McCarthy and Stone, have put in a revised application for 53 Assisted Living Extra Care apartments. The committee were critical of this second application as it appears inconsistent with the aim of the NP to create a balanced community, and the need to provide affordable homes for the younger generation. The Jet Garage site was also considered to be an unsuitable location for this type of Assisted Living accommodation, as it would be too far from facilities such as the cinema, theatre and library.

The other site for which an application has already been submitted is Highlands Farm. This is an outline application, and appears to be trying to establish the principle of developing the area to the maximum possible extent, with up to 170 homes plus 2000 sq m of commercial floor space plus a Community Hub. Certainly we were surprised that both 170 homes and 2000 sq m of commercial space were included.

Both of these applications, for the Jet garage site and Highlands Farm, are still under consideration at

SODC but they do illustrate an important point. This is that, while it may appear that the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan are settled, there is still a need to monitor planning applications to make sure that developers do not overstep the mark, and that they conform to its overall objectives and to good design.

Finally, I would mention that if you are interested in seeing the comments of the committee on individual applications, these are added to the Society's website after each meeting.

The meeting was followed by a talk by **Moira Hankinson about Open Spaces**



She gave suggestions for the landscape like these for the junction of Greys Road and Deanfield. She also did the entrance to Henley Tesco Roundabout and Northfield End. Not sure that Oxford County Council would agree to altering the highway in this way but it made interesting listening..

## **URGENT**

As mentioned above Mr Facy resigned from the Committee and unfortunately none of the present Committee felt that they could step into this shoes. We have also been advised that David Whitehead intends to stand down as our Chairman of the Planning Committee, after ten years in that position - we are hoping that he will continue on the Committee to lend his considerable knowledge to our discussions. We therefore are in need of members to stand for the Committee to take us forward. If you are interest please contact our Secretary Nora Scanlon. If no volunteers are forthcoming, the future of the Society is in doubt'.

## **VISIT TO HINTON AMPNER AND WINCHESTER**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June twenty three of our members enjoyed a most enjoyable day out at Hinton Ampner and Winchester. As it was the school holidays our travel was very easy with no traffic jams in either direction..

We arrived early at Hinton Ampner in time for a coffee. Although it was early June unfortunately the day was very cold so it took away the enjoyment of exploring the gardens. We were then welcomed by one of our members, Bill Hoskins, who is a guide at the house and were free to enjoy the furnishings and collection of ceramics and art of the elegant Georgian Style National Trust Property which was restored by the previous owner following a catastrophic fire in 1960.

We left Hinton Ampner at 12.30 pm and were transported into Winchester where we were free to have lunch and visit the Cathedral before leaving for home at 4.30 pm

## “HENLEY UNION WORKHOUSE – THE STORY OF TOWNLANDS”

Our Committee Member, Valerie Alasia, has recently published this book on Henley workhouse. It is the result of many years' research into the building and the treatment of the paupers there and the subsequent development into our community hospital.

After encouragement from her tutor on a local history course at Reading University, she visited the National Archives in Kew, Oxford History Centre and the Henley Library which houses microfilm of the “Henley Advertiser” and this forms the picture of how Henley dealt with the problem of the poor.

Now the old buildings are in the course of being transformed so this book is timely and serves as a

reminder of what was there. Despite the hardships suffered in the workhouse, Valerie has tried to make the book readable with some lighter moments and many illustrations.

Some of you may have seen her at this year's Henley Literary Festival. If you want a copy of her book you can get this from Richard Way Bookshop, The Bell Bookshop or Valerie Alasis 01491 575679

### **New Members**

I would like to welcome the following as members : Mrs Eileen Ball, Mr Andrew Yates, Mr Milton and Mrs Hilary Gordon, Mr Timothy and Mrs Susan Keown, and Mrs Sylvia Butler

### **Committee**

Chairman: Vacant

Vice Chairman: Ian Giuliani -

Hon Secretary - Nora Scanlon 01491 579619

Hon Treasurer & Membership Secretary - Sandra Moon 01491 573887

Chairman of Planning Sub Committee - David Whitehead

Committee: Jenifer Copeland, Pauline Fleming (Events Organiser), Valerie Alasia and Emma Abbott

Henley Town Council Representative: Sarah Miller

#### *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**