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Neighbourhood Plans

An integral part of planning

Spring 2015

New University Lecture

Prof. Sir Alan Wilson

Me and my house

Jean Ellis

Amazing places of Hereford

Moor House, Widemarsh Common

Hereford Tomorrow?

Urban Room and more

Hereford Now

Radford Gardens

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PREFACE



This quarter we are considering Neighbourhood Plans. An essential part of the planning process but how many are actually in place? See pages 4 and 5 for comments by plan makers, the Council, the public and our own members. What an excellent idea that local communities draw up ideas and proposals for their

locale. But what a palaver; not least they have to be in line with the Local Plan and our Core Strategy is still not in place. Secondly they require locals with plenty of time and the ability to understand the myriad of interconnecting policies and regulations. These people are generally self-appointed, or recruited by Parish Councillors. (I appreciate a parish referendum has to take place to endorse the plan). Further I accept that HCS pontificates on built environment matters but all in the interests of being a forum for discussion.

Meantime developers are applying for planning consent relying on the generalist National Planning Policy Framework. This means that what locals want are ignored as long as the proposals are sustainable (which has so many definitions it is

a lawyers' paradise). Locals might like to see a minimum proportion of two bedroomed houses – something HCS has long proposed, higher environmental standards than the minimum, more shared space and contemporary road design.

With the Council in purdah, (good excuse for doing nothing) and the world economy still unsure of itself clearly we are going to have to take more care of ourselves at a local level. How we manage that is what we tried to find out from our politicians at our series of "hustings" style meetings in March. Personally I'm not sure they know what to do, especially when it comes to the fast increasing costs of adult social care. They all have ideals, probably relish the power that comes with office, but let us hope that after 9th May we have some real leadership and plans that we can develop together.

Managing democracy seems to me to be the big question of our time but let us not forget that politicians are essentially unpaid and most devote a lot of time.

- John Bothamley

Contributors

John Bothamley – Chairman HCS, developer and chair of charitable grant making trust

David Clark – Chair and Manager, Fownhope Neighbourhood Plan

Jean Ellis – Full time Herefordian

John Faulkner – Retired chartered civil engineer, chairman of HCS 2003-2006

Tony Geeson - Chair, Breiton Parish Council

David Whitehead - Hereford historian and author

Design & Layout - E. Currie - Lead Designer, H. Joof & T. Schoenfeld

NEWS & COMMENT

High Town refurbishment

A programme of works for High Town has been agreed which will be phased over the next few years at a cost of £2.5m.; with phase one likely to start later this year following consultation with stakeholders. HCS is surprised that the major refurbishment in the

noughties, complete with inlaid wording, requires such major new works. Surely High Town just needs a major tidy up. Removing those two hideous warning signs at the west end, all the clutter around the mobile vendors caravans, the daft "advertising fences" around Starbucks and relaying the poor paving. £2.5m. could do up the Buttermarket or rebuild the burnt out buildings.

BID endorsed and New University launched

Things are happening in Hereford, there is a positive mood about as we wait for the results of the local and national elections. With a 75% vote by shopkeepers to support the Business Improvement District it all starts off on 1st April 2015, recruitment of a manager and a long list of projects already drafted. Congratulations go to John Jones, chairman of the BID steering group.

Exciting plans for the new University were celebrated with the First Lecture at the Courtyard – see page 6.

The Broadleys

Herefordshire Council has issued an "article four direction" meaning that the owners must now seek planning permission if they wish to change the use of the building. There had been concerns about the possibility of the owners, a pubco, converting the site to a supermarket. Although the article four direction does not prevent that taking place, it does mean the owners will now have to get specific planning consent.

Mark Haslem of CAMRA has been leading the crusade to maintain this pub as a community asset. Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011 provides for a scheme called 'assets of community value'. This requires councils to maintain a list of 'community assets'. It has also become known as the 'community right to bid'.

Community assets can be nominated by parish councils or by groups with a connection with the community. If the nomination is accepted, local groups will be given time to come up with a bid for the asset when it is sold. Further positive news is the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England)

Order 2015 which came into force on 6th April 2015. To ensure that protections are in place to prevent the loss of those drinking establishments that provide the most benefit to local communities, the Government is dis-applying the national permitted development rights for the change of use or demolition of Class A4 (drinking establishments). The changes will apply where any Class A4 have been formally listed by the local authority as being an asset of community value under the 2011 Act. This Act requires local authorities to maintain and make publically available the list of community assets.



HCS hustings

Four meetings in March brought together both local and national candidates. With crowded meetings, in the popular Kindle Centre, politicians and experts discussed built environment aspects of our future and, inevitably, the costs of running our Council services with reducing budgets. Considering the extent of the interest shown HCS wonders if it should extend its remit to cover more aspects of the political scene at a local level.

Joint Property Vehicle

Over the past year HC has been considering the possibility of establishing a Joint Property Vehicle to create a public sector owned company which would provide a single property management unit across a range of public sector bodies. This sounds like another Hoople exercise to HCS. With

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NEWS & COMMENTS

the questionable deal over the recent acquisition of the Three Elms industrial estate it is clear HC needs good property management, but to combine with others just further complicates what should be a straightforward matter. For the time being the Council will now consider alternative options.

Planning for All

John Thompson spoke at the Parliamentary launch of 'Collaborative Planning for All', produced in partnership with Civic Voice, our national charity for Civic Societies in England, on 13th February 2015. The document forms part of the new Civic Voice strategy, which, in the run up to the general election, is lobbying political parties to commit to give all citizens opportunities to actively shape the future of their place, through participatory 'charrette' processes and make improving the quality of the public realm in our cities, towns and villages a priority.

John Thompson said:

"A structured participatory process enables the community, the private sector and the local authority to work together in a creative way which ultimately adds value at all levels - physical, social, economic and environmental - leading to healthier, happier and more sustainable places."

John Thompson and Partners are consultants for the Church Commissioners on their Three Elms site.



Inspector's file of evidence

Community Asset Transfer

Herefordshire Council has decided to progress the transfer of the management of the Queenswood Country Park and Bodenham Lake to the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Herefordshire New Leaf. The transfer is in line with national and local policy which seeks to support the transfer of public assets and open spaces to local community groups.

HARC completed

Work on the Hereford Archive and Record Centre was completed in January and the process of transferring documents is under way. The new building will have better access for visitors and be more energy efficient, with running costs significantly less because of the leading edge Passivhaus design, the first time in this country for archive storage. Local firm Archtype should be congratulated on this advanced design concept. It is a pity that the Council used national consultants and contractors.



HARC Rotherwas

The new centre will offer a range of social and community outreach programmes, a dedicated educational room and improved facilities and access for the public. It will also bring the archive, the county's archaeology unit, the historic environment record and the biological records centre together in one building, allowing people access to all these records in one place. The £8.1m facility is funded from the Council's capital programme.

HEREFORD NOW

Hereford Housing (HH) has already started selling some their new homes on the redevelopment of the Oval site in Belmont. This redevelopment comes about as HH upgrades and improves the whole area with 259 new homes of which fifty percent are for sale and fifty per cent for rent.

Much consultation has taken place and there is a good mix of sizes.

HCS remains disappointed that this reworking of the estate still has the feel of a standard house builders' layout. Whilst we understand the need for a certain density the first rule in environmental matters is broken with large windows on the northern elevations! We know so much but don't apply the basics. This is why HCS is pushing for a Design Review Panel.



Radford Gardens

Core Strategy Examination

For two and a half weeks in February the County's Core Strategy up to 2031 was examined by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate.

There were three main groups of "players", Herefordshire Council defending the Plan; housing developers anxious that their land purchase options were not adversely affected and were preferably enhanced; and a small group of objectors, consisting primarily of 'It's Our County', Breinton Parish Council and Hereford Civic Society who pointed out the many aspects of the Strategy they believe are impractical and unrealistic.

It was clear from the matters raised by the Inspector that she was dubious about a number of the Strategy's proposals. A large number of questions were raised for the Inspector to consider.

Chief among these were:

- The number of houses being proposed and the practicality of their completion particularly with the need for the major infrastructure improvements required.

- The sources of financing which were felt to be not viable.
- The use of greenfield land and the effect on agriculture and the villages around the city.
- The phosphate pollution of the Wye and Lugg arising from the proposed expansion and the apparent absence of a viable Nutrient Management Plan to overcome this.
- The future for the historic core.

The result, as HCS has always felt, is that the Strategy needs major amendments. The Inspector has charged the Council with producing these; a key item is that they have to produce a programme showing how housing numbers, transport, infrastructure and finance are linked and viable through the life of the Strategy.

These major changes have to go to another public consultation and only then will the Inspector complete her report. So we still do not have a badly needed Strategy and are unlikely to know whether the amended edition will be acceptable to the Inspectorate before September at the earliest. In the middle of all this we have national and local elections which could result in changes of policy.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS



What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.

Neighbourhood Development Plans become part of the Local Plan and the policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications. Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders allow communities to grant planning permission either in full or in outline for the types of development they want to see in their areas.

Policies produced cannot block development that is already part of the Local Plan. (Herefordshire is waiting for approval of its Core Strategy from the Planning Inspectorate) What they can do is shape where that development will go and what it will look like.

How it works?

A local parish or town council will lead on neighbourhood planning in their area. Where one does not exist then a community group known as a neighbourhood forum needs to be established to lead. The Local Planning Authority is involved and will make decisions at key stages of the process, such as approving the neighbourhood area within which the Neighbourhood Development Plan will have effect. It will also organise the independent examination of the plan and the community referendum that is held at the end of the process.

The referendum is an important part of the process allowing those that live in the neighbourhood area to decide whether or not the Neighbourhood Development Plan, Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order comes into effect or not. This is direct democracy and outlines the importance of working with the wider community and securing their support at an early stage in the process.

Where we have got to

Fewer than a quarter of councils have a LP that was adopted since the NPPF was introduced, and only 33 were adopted in 2014. (Planning 27.2.15) A senior Planning Inspector has suggested that ministers are less than happy. The delays seem to be caused by a lack of political will, resource constraints and the length of the local plan documents.

But Communities Secretary Eric Pickles has aligned himself with groups preparing NPs giving weight to emerging NPs in planning applications referred to him.

Criticism of NPs has been unfounded according to Paul Tucker QC, stating that NPs have not been anti-development. *"Not a single plan that we have worked upon is anti-development, but they are against development of the wrong type in the wrong place. All are providing for the number of homes expected by the Local Plan and some are planning significantly more than that"*.

Andrew Ashcroft, Assistant Director - Economic, Environment and Cultural Services has stated that NPs are an integral part of the new planning process. Unfortunately he has been too occupied with work of the Core Strategy to provide his latest opinions on the process.

Only Eardisley quoted numbers

In our perusal of published draft plans we are intrigued to see a lack of detail but plenty of reference to other policies and documents. Phrases such as if viable, if demonstrated, evidence available at the time, and opportunities allow for plenty of disagreement and work for consultants in the future. Only Eardisley actually quoted numbers of new build houses it would like to see.

H1,a) To meet housing market needs the Neighbourhood Plan provides for a minimum of 45 new dwellings to be built in the Group Parish over the Plan period to 2031:

Eardisley – at least 30 new homes
Winforton – at least 7 new homes
Whitney on Wye – at least 5 new homes

Disillusioned Colin

Garway is a small parish in south Herefordshire with a lively community spirit and plenty of local events including live music once a month and the very popular Garway Heritage Group. It is a place with its own ideas and aspirations and published a Parish Plan in 2010. But with the need to update this plan to be in line with the yet to be agreed Local Plan was too much for this community.

"What is the point in doing it until such time as we know the overall plans for the County?"

With daft pressures over commons ownership, school numbers and the like this village is fed up with bureaucracy. Should it combine with other parishes to develop a more comprehensive approach? Possibly but not until the Local Plan is ratified.

- Colin Robinson - retired Parish Cllr

Kirkwells

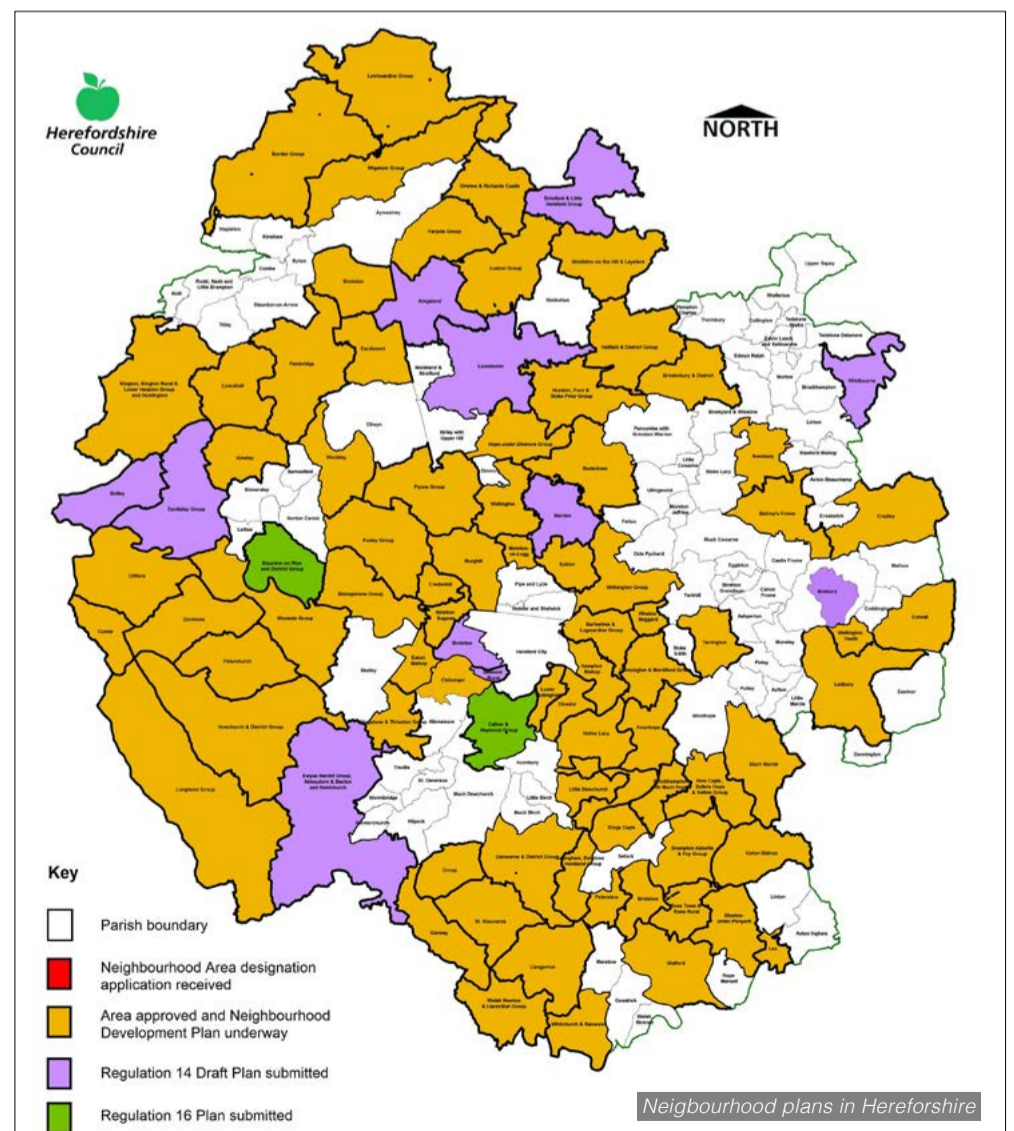
This firm of consultants has been used by a large number of parishes at c. £5,000 a time to support the creation of their NPs. There is a good deal of cutting and pasting although the detail is provided locally and most run to, at least, 50 pages.

When questioned about the validity of drafting before the Local Plan is in place their view was that planning evolves and amendments will always be required.

This appears to be an unreasonable stance when volunteers devote hundreds of hours attempting to get it right for their locality. They considered HC was more supportive than other local authorities.

Abbreviations

DCLG – Department of Communities and Local Government
HC - Herefordshire Council
HCC - Hereford City Council
LP - Local Plan
NP – Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework
PC – Parish Council



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

Fownhope's Plan

Fownhope's efforts at democratic plan - making continue to progress though it is far from easy. We worked hard to give residents more information about the planning rules and pressures, and attracted a third of residents to two all-day events. But many more, some 83%, responded to our resident survey in the autumn. Not simply a matter of ticking a few boxes as you might in May's election but real choices and options to add comments and further suggestions.



We know the scale of development, the desire for small-scale incremental development, priority on providing for local needs and rebalancing the housing stock with emphasis on smaller properties. Fownhope wants to reduce dependence on long-distance commuting, encourage local employment and services and contribute further to carbon reduction.

We want to keep our village Settlement Boundary, and protect the character of Common Hill. Local landowners have offered 12 potential housing sites.

We organised some walkabouts and sought professional assessments but a number of agents here, as elsewhere, have decided not to wait but invoke the absence of a five year land supply to seek planning permission now.

Not easy when the leading applicant is also your County Councillor and local farmer! We waited 8 months for a decision. The 33 home scheme was refused by the County planning committee in February as being a major development in an AONB.

Meanwhile our draft plan is delayed until the election period is over; how do we ensure we are in broad compliance with the Core Strategy when its outcome seems far from clear? Easy no! But will it work? Yes -there's too much energy and enthusiasm to countenance failure. Neighbourhood plans are here to stay.

- David Clark - Chair and manager
Fownhope Neighbourhood Plan

Breinton's Plan

With a group of articulate and knowledgeable councillors one would have expected the creation of a NP to have been an easy project; especially as it follows a Sustainability Action Plan and Community Led Plan published within the last three years.



Far from it, with in excess of 600 hours of volunteer time, and a DCLG grant paid to planning consultants of c£5,000, the plan is now only at the Regulation 14 stage for public consideration, then comes any redrafting.

After that HC takes over the consultation, arrangements for an Examination in Public and the local referendum.

Tony Geeson, chair of the Parish Council, is generally pleased with the 85 page document; when questioned about the extent of the area covered he thought that an enlarged area could have advantages of consistency although each small settlement has its own individual requirements.

He is not overly concerned about the lack of the LP and the HC support has been comprehensive in newsletters and guides but somewhat hands off as regards plan preparation.

- Tony Geeson - Chair Breinton
Parish Council

Hereford City Council

The HCC have chosen not to produce a NP, on the grounds of cost, and that any likely proposal which includes the number of houses required by the emerging Local Plan would be thrown out at the referendum stage.

Instead HCC will work with the HC, once the Local Plan is ratified, on a Local Development Plan. This plan will cover Hereford and the surrounding parishes including Breinton which already has a well developed NP, and Holmer, Dynedor, Belmont etc.!

One would have hoped that officers of the HC could have ensured that this sort of muddle and expense was avoided. Bearing in mind the active residents of Breinton, it is conceivable that they could claim to be there first and their Plan is sacrosanct in the absence of any NP covering Hereford?

Pickles supports

The Communities Secretary has not been hesitant to put his considerable weight behind NPs, in Aylesbury he issued an article 25 holding notice not to grant planning permission until the NP consultation was completed. In Buckinghamshire and Cheshire he has rejected new homes, in part, because of conflicts with emerging NPs.



Neighbourhood Planning Team

Samantha Banks, leader of the team of four planning officers assisting parishes with NPs, continues to talk up the successful progress of neighbourhood planning, with 89 designated NPs (i.e. saying you are going to prepare one) but with only two plans submitted for Reg.16 submission, (Step four in our chart).

Real progress depends on the Core Strategy being ratified and until that time no submissions can be properly examined and progressed to a local referendum. Her forecast of the likely timing of the Planning Inspectorate's decision is most optimistic at two months, and then the HC has to vote on its acceptance and by then we will have a new administration.

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

Steps in making a Neighbourhood Plan

Step 1: Designating neighbourhood area and, if appropriate, neighbourhood forum

- Relevant body submits an application to the local planning authority (LPA) to designate a neighbourhood area
- Local planning authority publicises and consults on the area application for minimum 6 weeks. Local planning authority designates a neighbourhood area within the statutory timescales
- Local planning authority publicises and consults on the forum application for minimum 6 weeks
- Local planning authority takes decision on whether to designate the neighbourhood forum

Step 2: Preparing a draft neighbourhood plan or Order Qualifying body develops proposals

- Gather baseline information and evidence
- Engage and consult those living and working in the neighbourhood

area and those with an interest in or affected by the proposals (e.g. service providers)

- Talk to land owners and the development industry, identify and assess options
- Determine whether a plan or an Order is likely to have significant environmental effect
- Start to prepare proposals documents e.g. basic conditions statement

Step 3: Pre-submission publicity and consultation

The Qualifying body:

- Publicises the draft plan or Order and invites representations
- Consults the consultation bodies as appropriate
- Sends a copy of the draft plan or Order to the local planning authority
- Where European Obligations apply, complies with relevant publicity and consultation requirements
- Considers consultation responses and amends plan / Order if appropriate
- Prepares consultation statement and other proposal documents

Step 4: Submission of a neighbourhood plan or Order proposal to the local planning authority

- Qualifying body submits the plan or Order proposal to the local planning authority
- Local planning authority checks that submitted proposal complies with all relevant legislation
- If the local planning authority finds that the plan or order meets the legal requirements it:
 - Publicises the proposal for minimum 6 weeks and invites representations
 - Notifies consultation bodies referred to in the consultation statement
 - Appoints an independent examiner (with the agreement of the qualifying body)

Step 5: Independent Examination

- Local planning authority sends plan / Order proposal and representation to the independent examiner
- Independent examiner undertakes examination
- Independent examiner issues a report to the local planning authority and

qualifying body

- Local planning authority publishes report
- Local planning authority considers report and reaches own view (save in respect of community right to build orders where the report is binding)
- Local planning authority takes the decision on whether to send the plan / Order to referendum

Steps 6 and 7: Referendum and Making the neighbourhood plan or Order

- Relevant council publishes information statement
- Relevant council publishes notice of referendum/s
- Polling takes place (in a business area an additional referendum is held)
- Results declared
- Subject to results local planning authority considers plan / order in relation to EU obligations and Convention rights
- If the plan / Order is compatible with EU obligations and does not breach Convention rights – local planning authority makes the plan or Order.

AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD



Moor House, Widemarsh Common

Moor House, Widemarsh Common

Herefordshire Council, at this very moment, is determining an application, which will affect one of Hereford's least known and most vulnerable heritage assets. Westfield Football Club, which occupies the parkland around the house, is seeking to extend and tarmac its car park, which sits immediately in front of the listed building. This is yet another stage in a long process of degradation for this fine Georgian house and its pleasant setting, which lies within a conservation area. Moreover, this is a conservation area closely identified with the Civic Society.

In 1974 the house was awaiting the implementation of Mrs. Chave's will, which gifted the estate to the old county council as a focus for a museum of Herefordshire rural life, when the chief planning officers of Hereford City Council invited the two-year-old Civic Trust to provide a statement of its significance.

This done and by the end of the year it was in a new Conservation Area.

Moor House was originally known as Prior's Moor and in the Middle Ages belonged to Llanthony Priory. It was surrounded by c. 200 acres of common land, which stretched westwards up the Widemarsh Brook and towards

the enclosing walls of Hereford. At the dissolution of the monasteries in c.1536 the estate was secularised and was eventually purchased by a branch of the Howarth family, domiciled at Vowchurch. The Howarths of the Moor flourished, and a new brick house was built by Anne Howarth, an heiress, and her husband Charles Cooke, soon after their marriage in 1714. The austere character of the house marks it out as one of the earliest brick buildings in the city. Brick makers are recorded working at Burcott, to the north of the Moor, during this period.

The door of the house is placed off-centre suggesting that an earlier building was integrated in the new-build, thus, on the ground floor west (left) there is a nooky parlour with 17th century square panelling. This is quite different in character to the classical entrance hall, enhanced by tall pilasters with Corinthian capitals, where a well-wrought staircase with turned balusters can also be seen through an arch. There is also a welcoming fireplace with a heavily moulded surround, embellished with Delftware tiles. The present writer has not seen inside for twenty years but one hopes that these fine features have survived the vagaries of institutional use.

In 1974 the house still had a polite landscape, punctuated by two sets of baroque gate piers, to indicate the compartmentalised nature of the

garden – a mini-Versailles, in some respects. This formal landscape had been naturalised in the late 18th century and a tributary of the Widemarsh Brook – perhaps canalised like Westbury-on-Severn – flowed close to the house. Wrapped around this fine ensemble was a miniature park, since 2000 used as a football ground, but still marked by some striking groups of Scots pines in the out-field. Moor House and its grounds still displays some Georgian graces but needs a little love. Maybe a group of volunteers could be organised to maintain the gardens and ensure that the fine array of aconites, snowdrops and crocuses, flowering at the moment, continue to do so in the future. Moor House certainly does not need a more extensive and permanent car park at its front door.

- David Whitehead – Hereford historian and author.



Art Exhibition

The Magna Carta Song Story
Photography - Animation - Music - Poetry.
Celebrating 800 years of Magna Carta 1215 - 2015
FUGUC
Hereford Museum Gallery
Broad Street
9th May - 6th July
ARTISTS IN HERITAGE

Magna Carta Song Story

Celebrating 800 years of living history

A dramatic coming together of animation, digital artistry and photography with newly composed poetry, set to specially commissioned music rooted in the ancient tradition.

Located in the heart of Hereford, Magna Carta Song Story will transport visitors back in time to reveal the origins and significance of Magna Carta. It should appeal particularly to those with an interest in local history and King John's time in Hereford.

- A digital animation recreating Hereford Castle. Destroyed in the 1650s, the castle will be re-imagined as it was at the time of King John using animation, digital photography and medieval artefacts from Hereford Museum's collection.
- Original choral music rooted in the ancient tradition. World premieres will be performed with groups including Academia Musica, Hereford Police Choir, Hereford Cathedral School and St Richard's choir. The Gilbert Consort will perform using its original period instruments.
- Singing kings. Medieval artefacts from Hereford's museum will be brought to life using animation - see Plantagenet Kings depicted on coins of the time bursting into song.



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New University's First Lecture

Professor Sir Alan Wilson delivered an inspiring lecture at the Courtyard on 12th March 2015. Working on the Foresight Future of Cities Project at UCL, he has been charged with imagining what cities will be like in 25 and 50 years' time, bearing in mind that much of what already exists will still be there. Sir Alan is an expert in the application and visualisation of spatial analytic techniques and simulation models for cities. He accepted that it is difficult to forecast patterns of living so far into the future, and expressed particular concern for the dominance of the car. What he would like to see is a properly planned and truly integrated public transport system supported by safe walking and cycling.

Using scientific models, Sir Alan developed scenarios which highlighted how universities improve a wide range of life experiences in their locations. He pointed out that Herefordshire is currently under represented in high level skills and education, and talked of how a university could improve the county's ability to increase its income. He is an ardent supporter of the work undertaken already by the NU team, and congratulated them on their effective efforts so far, seeing it as a driver for development.

PLANNING MATTERS



Me and My Home

Several of our members have agreed to talk about their homes in our City, their histories and the attributes they like. This quarter Jean Ellis writes about her family's long habitation within St.James.

Advert in the Hereford Times, March 1st 1893: "St Owen's Estate, formerly Groves Nursery. Most eligible and attractive building estate. Freehold plots for sale, St Owen St., Grove Rd., Grenfell Rd., Green St. For Builders Clerks and Artisans. No law costs." Mr. William.J.Bowers, a builder of repute, working for the John Venn's charities, bought the plots which were to become No2 to No 30 Grove Road. Mr.Ernest.G.Davies of St Jones Street was retained. He was a very competent architect. Our terrace is unique in Hereford. It has a stylish curve and the chimneys make an interesting feature.

Today, the 15 houses retain an identical unspoilt front appearance. The design of the doors is unchanged, and only 3 houses have double glazing in their bay windows. The bricks used are local, Holmer Reds, and the roofs are of Welsh slates. Unfortunately the Victorian spike shaped railings to the front were removed for the war effort. Under the front room, each house had a cellar with a window and a coal chute.

Inside, you enter through a longish hallway decorated with a Victorian arch. The front room and cellar doors open off the hall. Ahead is the dining room, once the main living area. Off that was, a small kitchen, with a deep sink and a large copper for wash days. The walls were painted bricks. I remember in the late 40's, a New World gas cooker which probably replaced a large range. No bathroom, of course, just a tin bath. It hung outside with the mangle and the dolly top for washday. Lighting was gas downstairs and candles to go to bed. Through a door and staircase from the dining room you reached the three bedrooms. The large front bedroom slept five at one time. The reason Grandfather became tenant of No28 in 1905, was his large family. Electricity arrived in the late 40's .but not to our house. Grandad did not trust it and he refused it!

The "Parlour" and dining room had Victorian shiny cast iron fire surrounds decorated with tiles. They were replaced in later years by modern fire places. I have now reinstated a

Victorian fire place. All internal doors and locks are original and still in situ. We all had a small backyard with access to the outside toilet, which incidentally backed onto the pantry. The small garden is a south facing sun trap, my own little oasis. It is enclosed by an attractive brick wall topped by half moon bricks. Behind that is our back access, a long alley way which runs the back of the terrace. It is a private way.

At Grandad's death (1954), his single daughter was allowed to take over the rent. Eventually, a grandson bought the house and a few years later it was my turn to buy the house, this house where I was born!!! In 1976 an extension was built on the end of the kitchen for a bathroom and toilet.

Grove Road has a pleasant atmosphere. We still enjoy street parties and share a feeling of good neighbourliness. We should be a Conservation Area.

- Jean Ellis

Next quarter John Faulkner writes about his home in Aylestone Hill.



Housing Land supply defined

Strategic Housing Market Assessments define the housing market areas in a local authorities jurisdiction. They determine need by considering changes in population and household make up over the plan period. SHMAs also determine housing demand as shown by the strength of the market and prices and affordability. Combining these determines an area's assessed need for housing. (You must be joking - forecasting the price of houses beyond 2030!)

HEREFORD TOMORROW?

What is a Civic or Urban Room?

- A Place where new ideas for our city are displayed
- A Place for us citizens to talk and debate our PLACE
- The past, the now and the future built environment
- Historical background
- Plans for the future.
- Stimulating discussions – a place to leave your mark

Why do we need one?

Our environment is what makes us thrive. Attractive places stimulate inhabitants, happy people get more done and enjoy life more. The Farrell Review published March 2014 www.farrellreview.co.uk proposed that all towns should have one. There are some already including the successful Belfast Place www.placeni.org which also undertakes Design Reviews.

Where would it be in Hereford?

Ideally in a central position, easily accessible for all and with convenient opening times.

An excellent example of design review is the Gloucestershire Design Panel. Here major projects are referred to the panel when officers have concern or need additional help, or when developers request an independent design review. In Belfast those projects that have been through the process tend to have an easier ride at the official planning stage.

How would they operate?

As independent, not for profit social enterprises, being no burden on the Local Authority but supported with information from Council Officers. A source for information exchange and consultations; a forum for Hereford and a support for developing the designs of projects throughout the LEP.

When?

As soon as possible

Who is going to pay for it?

A proportion of set up costs for the Urban Room is already promised by a charitable foundation.



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MEETINGS

15th January 2015 - Business Improvement District – John Jones.

John Jones (MD of Phillip Morris and Chairman Hereford BID Steering Group) explained the origin and objectives of the proposed Hereford BID. The aim was to have a body that professionally managed the city as a destination to encourage improved footfall and trading for the city.

BIDs can be set up under legislation that, if businesses agree, can levy an additional 1.2% of rateable value to produce a business plan and, independently of county or city councils, can carry out improvements, marketing, safety and security issues, and coordinate training and buying for smaller firms.

The area to be covered by the BID includes all the historic core, the new Old Market and Commercial Road. To set up the BID requires a ballot of all the businesses in the area (481 of them) and the result must show a majority of businesses and over 50% of the total RV of all businesses to be in favour. The ballot was in progress at the time of the meeting and the outcome was successful - good.

A BID would aim to produce a tidier, smarter and greener city by persuading the Councils to improve parking policy, signage, maintenance of paving etc.

City Councilor Phil Edwards was present and said the proposal would have the full support of the City Council. The discussion that followed showed much support for a BID and welcomed the improvements that it could bring. There was particular mention of the state of pavements and the future of the Buttermarket and the fire wrecked building in High Town. - JBLF

19th February 2015 – Ledbury Places – Alex Clive, Andy Tector

Alex Clive, the passionate chairman of Ledbury and District Civic Society, entertained us with news on the progress of this innovative project.

Firstly he referred to the completion of the major refurbishment of the Masters House by Herefordshire Council, with a million pound grant from the Heritage Lottery Board. Dating back to 1487 this timber framed building had a brick cladding added in the 18th century and was listed on the Buildings at Risk register.

The Ledbury Places project, led by Alex, is a grouping of interested amenity societies concerned about the future of Ledbury's historic buildings. Members include the Town Council, Herefordshire Council, Civic Voice, Friends of the Masters House, John Masefield Society as well as the Civic Society. The buildings involved are the Burbage Hall, Butchers Row House Museum, Masters House, Market Hall and the Elizabeth

Barrett Browning Institute and are under various ownerships including the Herefordshire Council.

Whilst each group has its own ideas, the project aims to preserve and use productively all of the buildings. With the library moving to the newly restored Masters House what is to become of the Barrett Browning building? Clearly an overall plan for the ongoing use of each old buildings is needed. Andy provides helpful technical input having been an employee of HC! Ledbury Places has been inspired by the Locality Group and is a separate company.

An innovative project that requires a huge amount of patience and tact to reconcile all the various proposals and dreams of the myriad partners. - JB

5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March 2015 – Four hustings style meetings

Remaining apolitical and, as we are in the infamous purdah period, we thought we should not comment in too much detail on the inspiring and intelligent conversations that occurred. At one meeting there was unanimous support, from everyone, for a 20 mph limit across all urban areas. There was no proposal for the future funding of increasing adult social care costs, politicians being essentially of mature years and looking short term! Remaining apolitical and, as we are in the infamous purdah period, we thought we should not comment in too much detail on the inspiring and

intelligent conversations that occurred. At one meeting there was unanimous support, from everyone, for a 20 mph limit across all urban areas. There was no proposal for the future funding of increasing adult social care costs, politicians being essentially of mature years and looking short term! A continuing theme was the frustration of having to jump so many bureaucratic hurdles in many areas. We seem to have the knowledge and the ideas but actually achieving them is often fraught with procedural objections. After the last meeting on 26th March John Bothamley, chairman HCS, reiterated the Society's aims largely in line with those of Civic Voice, the national civil society body of which we are members.

To achieve real localism we need to:

- Make improvements to the quality of the public realm.
- Give our citizens the opportunity to actively shape the future of our PLACE – HCS wants to see the establishment of an Urban Room.
- Become more creative with planning use classes
- Establish a Place Design Review Panel for the Marches LEP.

"Let's hope our new politicians in May have the vision and leadership to make change, and create a better PLACE in which we live, work and play. Decent, well designed places make us feel better and help us to treat each other better." - JB

YOUR OPINIONS



Sasha Norris writes after a hustings meeting

I asked a question as to whether the panel saw a relationship between the loss of countryside tranquillity and wildlife and multinational corporations. I expected this question to enliven debate, and was surprised the panel were so stymied.

When we invite big chains into our town, we invite also their powerful and wealthy lobbies. They want, in an absolute sense, more people, acting as 'consumers' in their shops. This population increase means more housing, more cars, less tranquillity and less wildlife. Unfortunately, a larger population will lead to less hedgehogs, more traffic, a greater demand on services such as the NHS, and sadly, a less friendly and

personable environment to live in.

Many of us also feel overwhelmed in their own homes by the sheer ownership of belongings. While there exists a powerful relationship between nature and well-being, shopping does not make us happier in the long term. The list of five ways to mental wellbeing from the NHS; connect, be active, keep learning, give to others, take notice; does not mention shopping.

In essence, people are happier in all natural environments than they are in urban ones. They particularly feel happy in coastal areas, mountains, moors, heathland and woodland. Put simply, paving over our countryside, makes spaces where people feel less happy. Conserving and allowing access to wild areas makes people happy. Herefordshire retains a natural glory which is now almost unique in England.

Join Us

If you want to influence the future of the City and enjoy lectures and discussions about the built environment, old and new, JOIN US - your membership fee covers printing and distribution of our magazine, meeting expenses and, web site and publicity costs. It does not cover members' time - all of which is freely given.

Subscription: Single £15 pa. / two memberships at the same address £25 pa. Questions?

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in the letters, reviews, news and features in this issue are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the members of Hereford Civic Society.

Forthcoming Events

All meetings at the Kindle Centre, by ASDA, Belmont, Hereford HR2 7JE.
7.00pm refreshments for a 7.30pm start

Thursday 21st May 2015

Property Values in Hereford
Joanne Cobb - explains the intricacies of the market

Thursday 18th June 2015

70th Celebration of VE day in Hereford
Derek Foxton - archive pictures of our city, end of WW2

Saturday 18th Jul 2015

PLACE study trip - Mid Wales tour - SEE FRONT PAGE FOR ESSENTIAL BOOKING DETAILS

Thursday 17th September 2015

Politics - are they delivering?
The new administration explains

Thursday 15th October 2015

Hereford Tomorrow (and AGM)

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