

Priceless

Place Hereford Civic Society

The City's built environment forum

High Town Public Realm Consultation

Consultation response by HCS

Winter 2015/16

Local Transport Plan 2016 - 2031

James Copeland

Herefordshire Bus Services

Gareth Calan Davies

Me and My House

Nicolas Swingler

Hereford Now

In a Hereford Field

Hereford in Bloom volunteers are leading, in partnership with the City Council and BID, a mission to rescue Hereford from becoming a flower free zone. Hereford has won Gold in the Britain in Bloom competition for the last three years. Well done to all those involved, community taking the lead, raising local funds and appointing local contractors.

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PREFACE



HCS remains a forum to discuss matters built environment, including preserving the best of the past and looking forward. What concerns me is the absence of an overall, agreed

plan for Hereford. I know we have the Local Plan ratified and the next job for the Herefordshire Council is the Hereford Development Plan but currently councillors are consulting us on various isolated projects. High Town improvements, the future of the library and, yet again, the contra flow cycle route in St. Owen's Street are just three.

- The HCS response to the High Town Public Realm Improvement Consultation is detailed on page four. What sort of organisation digs up its front drive within ten years of laying it? Come on we need a more responsible approach.
- The future of the Library is in doubt; so councillors are asking for an organisation to take it off its hands without detailing what it considers are its statutory duties.

How can anyone attempt to raise funds without knowing the extent of income legally due from the Council?

- In St. Owen's Street the much discussed contra flow cycle route was proposed in detail by Amey; Balfour Beatty Living Spaces said it was necessary to survey the entire street again. Now, in January, we are expected to regurgitate our comments as part of the consultation exercise.

As always, looking forward and being positive and supportive of a Local Authority that has a huge task, I plead for an overall plan that we can all work towards. I understand there are unknown factors, such as will there be a university? But let us look at a City wide plan within which private enterprise can

join up the dots.

I'm intrigued by the Hereford Emerging Vision page on the Hereford 2020 website. Is this a starting point for the soon to be worked upon Hereford Development Plan? At what stage do we residents have a chance to input? The HCS has proposed establishing an "Urban Room" where ideas and tentative and real plans for a future Hereford come together and where residents' opinions can be fed into the planning system. The current priority for our Councillors should not be the replacement of paving in High Town but the successful delivery of current projects and the creation of the Hereford City Development Plan, with a vision that extends beyond present horizons into the 2030's.

John Bothamley

NEWS & COMMENT

200 free walks

Twenty people assembled in Rotherwas at the new Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre (HARC), in eager anticipation of Herefordshire Archaeology's 200th Historic Landscape Walk on Tuesday November 10th. The walks take place all over the county in all weathers. Tim Howerd, of Herefordshire Council's Archaeology Service, has been organising and leading these walks throughout the county on public rights



Tim Howerd

of way every month since April 1999, each walk covering new ground. Designed to introduce members of

the public to the constantly changing aspects of life, both past and present, that influence the type of landscape in which we live. People from the local community and from further afield are welcome.

"It's a good way of meeting people with an interest in the countryside, in fact I met my late partner on my first walk in 2002", said Jean Wynne-Jones. But is this what a cash strapped local authority should be providing for free?

Local Plan adopted in October

After many years in preparation the Herefordshire Local Plan, which will act as the cornerstone for planning and development in the county, is now adopted. An extraordinary council meeting on 16th October 2015 agreed that the Local Plan Core Strategy should be adopted. Councillors agreed to incorporate a range of modifications into the plan, as proposed by the planning inspector, and which came forward as an outcome of the examination hearings earlier this year. HCS remains somewhat concerned that there are some gaps that will not necessarily be filled by local Neighbourhood Plans.

HLF Rotherwas Grant

A Lottery grant has provided three quarters of the funding needed to remember the contribution of women who worked at Hereford's former munitions factory. Heritage Lottery Funding [HLF] has awarded £77,100 to the £101,800 project, which will mark 100 years since the factory opened in Rotherwas in 1916. The two-year programme will create a digital archive about the factory and its workers, fund a series of community events and work with schools to explore and preserve its history.

Neil Kerr, vice-chairman of the Enterprise Zone Board, said "The programme of events will

commemorate the part it has played in our history and record and celebrate the contribution of the people who worked here particularly the huge workforce of women."



Work starts on inner link road

Civic Voice Design Awards

Griff Rhys Jones launched the second annual Civic Voice Design Awards for community recognition of local design at last year's winning building, Gloucester Services Northbound, on 8th December 2015.

The CV awards are the people's choice for architecture and the built environment. It is the only design awards scheme in England which allows communities to celebrate the buildings, places and spaces they love for their high quality design and positive impact on the local community. Following on from the success of the 2015 awards, Civic Voice invite

Contributors

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

Mo Burns – Environmentalist

James Copland – Transport Consultant

Gareth Calan Davies – Geographer and transport expert

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

Ben Nash – Chairman Herefordshire CPRE

Nicolas Swingler – New Herefordian and writer

David Whitehead – Hereford historian and author

Design & Layout - Gary Nozedar
Front Cover

Burntwood School – Stirling Prize winner

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RIBA

NEWS & COMMENT

nominations from civic societies and other community groups nationwide to the 2016 awards. The deadline for applications for this year's awards is 14th February 2016, with the winners being announced at an event in Parliament.

Prince Charles and BIMBYS

Civic Voice and 12 civic societies from across the country were present at the launch event for the Prince's Foundation 'Beauty In My Back Yard' (BIMBY) Housing Toolkit in October. The event took place at Clarence House where the civic societies met Prince Charles to discuss the BIMBY Toolkit and what it can do for them. The BIMBY Housing Toolkit has been developed to help empower communities to work with local authorities and developers to create a regional BIMBY Housing Manual. Do we really want another set of guidelines? We already have Neighbourhood Plans; whilst often impressed by the Prince's efforts to bring architectural matters to the public's attention do we want more directions

Virtuous Circles

In October, Golden Valley co-op members and several local people met to learn about the next stage of the Virtuous Circles project to create an accommodation pod within the un-used Dulas church. The pod will be free-standing and easy to remove and will sit within the nave. It is intended to generate sufficient holiday-let income to cover the maintenance costs of the building and to leave the chancel available for quiet contemplation, shelter for passing hikers and cyclists and small-scale services. Internally it is surprisingly spacious and the chancel is large. The churchyard, enclosed from grassland in the 1880s and unimproved and so very rich in wild plants is managed according to Caring for Gods Acre principles.



Dulas Church



HEREFORD NOW

In a Hereford Field

Christian Montez and Kyra Powell returned to the county this year after studying. Fed up with paying rent and unable to afford a home, they decided to build a cabin, with hardly any budget, to live in as a stepping stone to owning their own house. Constructed of second hand corrugated iron and other various off cuts it is a tribute to recycling. Both qualified designers they built this

intriguing construction at minimal cost, but unfortunately it does not have a bathroom so they have to use Kyra's parents' house near to where it is situated. As the structure is on wheels it doesn't require planning consent, or does it? It appears to be more than 3.5 m high which would suggest it might do. HCS highlights this so that other industrious people don't have their special minimal places subject to the wrath of the Planners.



house in a field

Tarnia McAlester and Joanna Layton are the project officers charged with getting the stage 2 HLF bid prepared. More information from www.churchcare.co.uk/aboutus/campaigns/news/906-hlf-virtuous-circles

RIBA Stirling Prize

Burntwood School, a large comprehensive girls' school in Wandsworth by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) won the coveted RIBA Stirling Prize 2015 for the UK's best new building. Now in its 20th year, the RIBA Stirling Prize is the UK's most prestigious architecture prize. AHMM's transformation of Burntwood School reimagines a 1950's modernist secondary school campus for 2000 girls and 200 staff. The architects created six new faculty buildings and two large cultural buildings linking original buildings by renowned 50/60s architect Sir Leslie Martin. Every building is full of light and air with double height spaces at the end of each corridor to increase natural daylight and create well-framed views. It offers a range of teaching spaces from conventional classrooms to interactive open spaces. Already a very sculptural building, AHMM worked closely with an artist to use large, colourful murals throughout the buildings – cleverly combining signposting with modern art.

Our Editor was shown around by the Head Teacher, Helen Dorfman, who clearly was a major inspiration to the architects, and acknowledged by them as such. The students have enjoyed the transformation as it occurred around them during school time. What an experience for these girls to witness the creation of a masterpiece and then to enjoy by studying within it. (Image on front cover)

www.architecture.com/StirlingPrize/RIBASTirlingPrize2015.aspx

Herefordshire Tree Week 2015

A programme of events and activities around the county kicked off on Tuesday 24th November with i-Spy Trees of Kington at a meeting of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. There was a Tree Week Kington Arts Exhibition "Inspired by Trees" and a Walk in the Woods "A contrast of old and new woods: Wyevale and Drovers Woods in Breinton" On Tuesday 1st December a talk: Harnessing the Energy Transactions of Trees in Village Design. Different organisations all providing in depth studies of the immense value of trees, inspired by Herefordshire Tree Forum.

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CONSULTATIONS

Local Transport Plan 2016 - 2031

James Copeland

Herefordshire Council finishes consulting on their new Local Transport Plan covering the period 2016-2031 on 31st January 2016 - they say the Plan has been drafted to reflect Herefordshire's newly adopted Core Strategy, which itself sets out plans for more housing and jobs and the infrastructure required for their delivery. The Local Transport Act 2008 requires local transport authorities to produce and review local transport plans and policies. The Plan sets out the Council's grand strategy for supporting economic growth, improving health and wellbeing and reducing the environmental impacts of transport.

Somewhat perversely, it proposes to do this by a massive programme of road building, including the Southern Relief Road and a two phase Western Relief Road, which will eventually join the A49 north of the City in 2027. In an attempt to complement, or offset this, enhanced walking, cycling and bus measures are proposed but rail is barely mentioned and innovative ideas such as electric trams don't get a look in.

The transport objectives are stated as:

1. Enable economic growth.
2. Provide a good quality transport network for all users.
3. Promote healthy lifestyles.
4. Make journeys easier and safer.
5. Ensure access to services for those living in rural areas.

All manner of broad sweep diagrams prevail with lots (and lots) of equally sweeping statements such as 'effective partnerships to deliver our strategy'. There is little, or no detail, to support these statements, and, more alarmingly, there is no mention at all of cost and how the myriad proposals are to be funded, either at the design stage or

the construction stage. Further, timing of many proposals is vague or non-existent. There are sub-sections for High Town Package (itself currently out for consultation), City Centre Transport Package, South Wye Transport Package and so on, all filled with good intentions, but will they be delivered when, for example, the much needed 'Transport Hub' (at the railway station) is pushed back to 2019/20 when it should have been completed by now (as part of ESG)? By its very nature, the Plan only looks forward, and it's all very well having grand ideas and policies for a 15+ year period, but Governments and Councils will come and go in that period, and, as we have

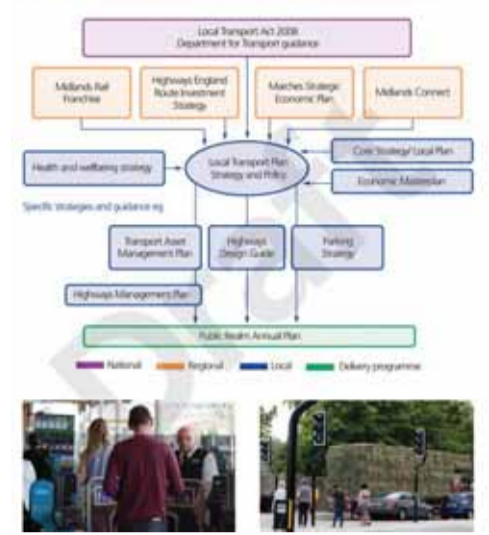


seen so often before with Herefordshire Council, they have no hesitation in sidestepping their own adopted policies when it suits them, or they simply lose the drive or the need to finish grand schemes - the '20 Year Vision' for the abandoned ESG being a prime example.

Given the rapidly changing nature of society as a whole and modes of transport in particular, perhaps grand planning such as this is an outmoded way of thinking - many of the problems the Plan highlights, such as the 'ageing' traffic light software, have been known about, and complained about, for many years, and could easily, quickly and economically be addressed now* to make everyone's life better which is, after all, the stated aim of the Plan.

*although many HCS members believe that traffic lights are outdated and shared space is a far better deal, especially for

Role of the Local Transport Plan



cities like Hereford.

The Local Transport Plan home page, draft documents and evidence base are available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/LTP-consultation.

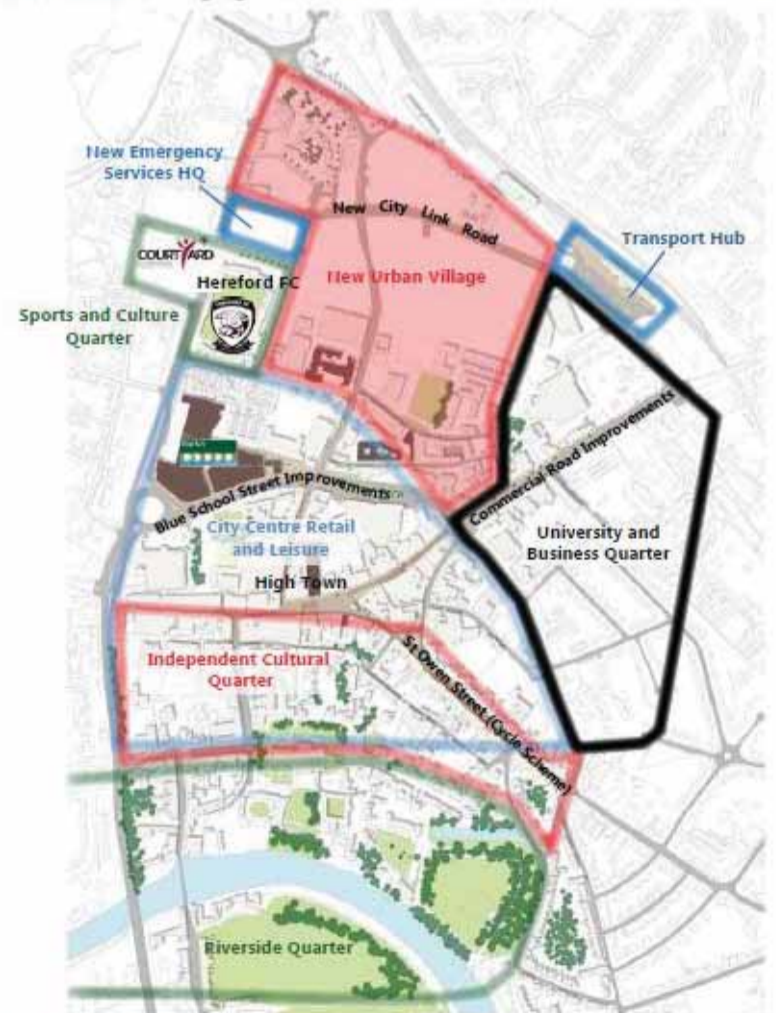
Hereford Emerging Vision

This forward looking vision is shown on the Hereford 2020 website and can be found by going first to the Herefordshire Council website and then entering High Town Public Realm Consultation, not by going to www.Hereford2020.com What is intriguing is that this appears to be what HCS wants – an overall vision, but it is one that has not been consulted upon. Here we have ideas imposed upon a diverse City. What is an Independent Cultural Quarter? Zoning was a fifties phenomenon – in a City like Hereford haphazard development is what makes it a real place. The plan shows no Civic Quarter and a Transport Hub that fails to recognize the large volumes of people who use the Tesco bus station and St. Peter's Square bus stands. This is how cities work - we don't want "Quarters" imposed upon us.

Maybe this Vision is a suggestion for the, soon to be consulted upon, Hereford Development Plan?

What HCS would like to see is a looser set of ideas about quarters and a definite plan for the movement of people. We need a decent walking route into the City for those who arrive by train, shared space road surfaces, no traffic lights, gateways and a riverside walk. We'll lobby Councillors and Cabinet members and when we get our Urban Room (still under discussion) it will be the place where the outline plans for Hereford can be shared, consulted upon and properly discussed.

Hereford Emerging Vision



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CONSULTATIONS

High Town Public Realm Consultation December 2015

This response to the consultation endeavours to capture the broad range of members' opinions, bearing in mind the Society is a forum for the built environment. The Herefordshire Council asked for comments via an over enthusiastic Survey Monkey questionnaire, even asking for views on parking restrictions in specific streets. At the time of compiling this report the new web site www.hereford2020.com was not providing full details of the wider improvements, nor plans showing the Hereford City Centre Traffic Package, which we reported upon in our Summer 2015 magazine PLACE, and clearly is relevant.

Overall scheme

Clearly there are areas of paving that need attention; but the wholesale replacement of hard landscaping is entirely frivolous, especially in times of austerity. The three phased approach will mean disrupting trading three times. The current paving does not discourage visitors to High Town. The new paving will not attract additional visitors.

It is unlikely there is one person in the whole of Hereford who would dig up his or her driveway and then replace it again within eight years of installation. The brass letters will eventually all disappear and the indentations will still tell a story. The few areas of subsidence, especially in front of the Butter Market, need little more attention than a man and a barrow, not an international company – consider the huge savings that are being made by parishes across the county undertaking local maintenance at reasonable cost.



Church Street junction

Design Approach

The Society remains unhappy with the use of one company to undertake design, supervision of works and execution. There is already in place the excellent work by Ben Hamilton-Baillie entitled the Hereford Streetscape Design Strategy April 2009 that was largely embraced by all parties as the way forward for Hereford in terms of street design. Further there is no reference to the improvements scheduled for elsewhere in the City.

(Hereford City Centre Traffic Package). Both the above two projects entail huge investment but there is a middle way.

First spend the money on our junctions and gateways.

A landscape architect would consider the City holistically and alight on which special features to highlight, of which there are many in Hereford. Further he/she would study the habits of the occupiers of the public spaces, the daily movements, what people actually do. There is much research on this and essentially we are all looking at other people, looking in shop windows and avoiding the clutter of A boards, kiosks and their paraphernalia; we are not looking much above ground floor level and we are not looking at the paving on which we walk. What happens in between does not matter as much because we do not notice it.

The Sustainable Transport Package of 2012 was allocated to expensive improvements to Broad Street, but the Council (encouraged by HCS) rightly transferred much of this spend to improving cycle routes.



buildings make the place

The High Town budget should now be transferred to improvements to the junctions at

- Broad St./West St./East St. (proposed in the consultation)
- Church St./East St.
- Bath St./St. Owens St./Ledbury Rd.
- Blueschool St./Commercial Road and Commercial St./Bath St/Union St.
- Urgent improvements to High Town and the sprig down to St. Peter's Square.



the Kerry junction

Specific improvements

The consultation documents provide little real detail and do not provide the legally necessary option- "do nothing".

Trees. Existing silver birch are past their sell by date and a few well-placed trees are considered essential. The Hereford Tree Forum has proposals that we endorse.

New Street Furniture. We prefer a contemporary design. Whilst the new seating in the old Market is hardly high quality, a case could be made to have similar to continue the one City theme to which we should all be working.

Lighting. The existing lighting standards are both appreciated and hated. Here again it is an extravagance to remove functioning lighting that lights the whole area in an inconspicuous way. We believe they should be retained and are preferable to expensive light fittings fixed on buildings and Victoriana should not be used.

Cycle Parking. There is insufficient detail to comment apart from suggesting that much more needs to be provided; although care should be taken not to turn large areas into cycle parks as seen at many London Stations. Smaller blocks of cycle racks spread around the city centre to give twice the cycle parking would be preferable.

Signage. This should be coordinated and much work was completed on this under Destination Hereford and further consultation is NOT required.

City Squares. Hereford needs to regain its status as a premier county city. Great city places in this country, and on the continent, are largely uncluttered areas providing a focus. If one thinks of Hereford we suggest many think immediately of High Town – it should be a grand space with café tables spilling out from restaurants – not a cluttered area of kiosks, gas bottles and waste bins. Perhaps it should also sport a great screen on which to display special events, with a magnificent sound system. Perhaps a movable investment for the city as a whole so that it could be used for festivals/ events elsewhere on Castle Green, Cathedral Close and Bishops' Meadow?



St Owens Street junction. Bath Street

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Neighbourhood Plans progress

HCS continues to worry about the lack of real progress developing local plans, all part of the planning process, and urgently needed to support the Core Strategy. Respectfully the NP team of planners assisting parish councils is somewhat coy about divulging precise figures. Apparently 95 plans are registered, our term, meaning HC has been informed that a plan will be created. But in mid December the figures were "6 plans are at examination; 6 have been submitted to examination; 6 have completed their draft consultation at reg14 and are with the parish councils for update; 6 are currently on draft consultation". That doesn't sound like good progress to us. It is a complicated and time consuming process for volunteers. More direction should have been given and for small communities of 300 to have their own plan is ludicrous. Consultants, and Government grants to pay for them, have inspired this approach. Parishes should have grouped into "Localities", remember that good idea promoted by the previous administration now forgotten?

FEATURE

The end of an era for Herefordshire bus services – Gareth Calan Davies



Gareth Calan Davies

The withdrawal of all First Midland Red bus services from Herefordshire and the closure of the Hereford Friar Street Garage in September marks the end of an era for Herefordshire bus services. The story began when the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus company expanded their operations out from their Birmingham base. In May 1915 they reached Bromyard, followed shortly by the extension of services across the Malvern Hills to Ledbury. In March 1920 they decided to establish a base in Hereford itself, the original proposal being for ten buses, ten drivers and ten conductors.

On March 17th the first buses arrived and services radiating from the city began to be established. The Company's first base in the city was in the yard of the Black Lion Inn in Bridge Street and with ten buses it must have been very cramped. There was no electricity, very primitive maintenance facilities and the petrol was kept in tin cans! The drivers were even issued with instructions that in the event of a breakdown the vehicle must not be returned to depot until a repair had been effected at the roadside. The vehicles themselves were primitive (as seen in the picture of an early SOS type) and mechanically simple by modern day standards.

In 1925 four daily city services were started and with this expansion came a move into the Friar Street site where a larger garage with full maintenance facilities was established. At this

time there were many bus operators in Herefordshire as there was no licencing of vehicles, drivers or routes. Competition was fierce and the matter became so dangerous that the government acted and the 1930 Road Traffic Act introduced compulsory licencing for all public service vehicles, drivers, conductors and routes. This led to the expansion of the Birmingham & Midland Company's operations and the take-over of many



smaller companies followed. During its heyday the Midland Red, as it had become known, covered a large part of Herefordshire.

The war years saw many services extended to the munitions factory at Rotherwas and in the 1950's there was a further progressive expansion of city and country services together with long distance services such as Hereford-Ludlow-Birmingham and Hereford-Worcester-Stratford-Leicester. The 'Friendly Midland Red' as the company was portrayed became a household name in Herefordshire and the Midlands.



However, by the early 1960's the growth in ownership of the private car began to seriously erode bus passenger numbers and revenue. In 1968 bus companies were nationalised and Midland Red became part of the National Bus Company. However, despite subsidies from local authorities to maintain services, the situation by the end of the 1970's became critical. In the early 1980's Herefordshire made the news, becoming a Trial Area for the de-regulation of bus services in the hope of stimulating competition in the



industry and thus reducing demands on the public purse. As a result of a perceived threat to its established operations Midland Red withdrew from most of rural Herefordshire in order to concentrate on the more economically viable city services. The 1986 Transport Act de-regulated all bus services and privatised the National Bus Company. In Hereford & Worcester a new company, Midland Red West Ltd was formed by the previous management. Midland Red West Ltd came into the First Group of companies in the early 21st century, being registered as First Midland Red Buses. However, First Group has since found itself in financial difficulties and it has come as no surprise in the bus industry that First Bus is pulling out of Hereford. With the departure of the last First Midland Red bus from Friar Street Garage in September there draws to a close another colourful and interesting part of Herefordshire's transport industry. Local bus companies Yeomans and DRMBUS are to take over the First Midland Red routes. With virtually no government money to support services, especially in rural areas, it remains to be seen whether these companies can operate a financially viable network. If not the future for bus services in Herefordshire looks very bleak.

Heritage Open Day (HOD) 10th & 11th September 2016



Together with the Woolhope Club HCS is organising this annual event in Hereford enabling members of the public

to see behind those doors that are usually shut. This, well established, free event gives us the opportunity to go inside special buildings whose owners have graciously agreed to open. We already have a number lined up and if you would like to open up your doors we can make the arrangements for you. Our suggestion is that we open on Saturday 10th and/or Sunday 11th September for as many hours as you are comfortable with, and have volunteers available to assist you with stewarding if you would like. Firstly please contact either David Whitehead (david.whitehead.hafod@care4free.net) or John Bothamley (01981 580002 or email john@johnbothamley.co.uk) to hear more and we'll take it forward from there. We even arrange the insurance – please join in – Hereford has so many buildings to show off and HOD here hasn't been the huge success it has been in other cities. Please join us.



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Tree Wardens Wanted

Herefordshire Tree Forum (HTF) is working with Parish Councils to re-establish a Tree Warden Network across the county. There are some existing TWs still operating from the original network James Bisset set up over a decade ago, either as part of their parish council or simply independently.

HTF is also working closely with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, with their especial interest in Herefordshire's heritage and notable trees - and other partners from all sectors with an interest in preserving, maintaining and promoting the health and wellbeing of our trees.

Tree Wardens are normally appointed by Parish Councils. Their voluntary role is to be the eyes and ears for the trees in a community. They look after the welfare of trees; preserving the notable veterans, encouraging an appreciation of them and planting for the next generation. Tree Wardens also try to involve their wider community in these healthy practical activities.

PLANNING MATTERS

Me and My Home – Nicholas Swingler



Richard Weaver Photography

Where I live is not where I want to live. Some six years ago, suddenly very ill with leukaemia, I signed an assured non-shorthold tenancy agreement, swapping a Camden Council flat in London that had been made uninhabitable with lead dust by council contractors, for a housing association owned studio-flat in a block of 36 flats in Drybridge House in St Martin's Street, Hereford. The move was inadequately researched but at least

there was the hospital in the city-centre and the flat was, and is, a walkable distance into town.

My flat comprises a bed-sitting room with kitchen and bathroom. A few strides from the front door and you've covered the square footage; ceilings are low, too. There's a communal laundry, yes, but the greatest – if not only – landlord-provided luxury is the snooker room. I carpeted and curtained my new address (no help from my landlord) and am up-to-date with my rent etc. (now £485 monthly). For most of my tenure I've been so ill and on-and-off so close-to-death that where I lived was scarcely a priority, but seeming return to health

has coincided with my landlord spectacularly mismanaging major building works. Had it not been for HCS and me objecting at planning stage to Herefordshire Council, the block of flats could have been ruined with new windows-that-had-almost-forgotten-the-true-purposes-of-windows (it was extremely arguable whether new windows were needed at all). Had it not been for much protest from several tenants, me included, every single flat would – in a surge of landlordly barbarism – have lost its bath.



Inside flat 5

And before these thoroughly invasive, dirty, noisy, works the landlord had already redecorated common parts, surely an affront to any kind of ordinary thoughtfulness. Tenants' front doors are now repainted in what I, from childhood memory, would call an undercoat shade of grey. Where I live is not where I want to.

I recognise that what I could cope with when I was so unwell is not what suits me now. The block is really for older and infirm people who welcome the level of control over their environment that is making me feel so over-managed. I am happy to buy or rent and am really looking for a bright and airy flat where I would be content to spend time. Yes, Drybridge is incontestably my address but it's not

home; it feels like a place to die. My dream flat would have the following features...

To live, meet others, read, write, yes (seriously) to do arithmetic, I'm off, away, to café, hotel lobby or railway carriage. Still, unhomely as I seem to be, I would like a better address. A great empty cube of space in a city-centre flat with a place-for-everything and everything-in-its-place (I'm careless whether I rent or buy). Oh, and no car-parking required: my new, bespoke, boots were made for walking.



Drybridge House

Last quarter we failed to attribute the article on Glenview to our member, and regular contributor, David Whitehead, for which we apologise.

Planning Application 152316

Land at 12 Kyrle Street, Hereford, HRI 2ET

Consent was given under delegated powers in October 2015 in spite of the report by the Planning Officer. "Policy SDI serves to safeguard the residential amenity of proposed residents as well as existing neighbours and in this instance the proposed residents would encounter a sub-optimal provision of amenity. Notwithstanding this, the fact that all future occupants of this property would be aware of this relationship prior to moving in does deflate this issue somewhat. Those occupants who move

into this bungalow do so in the knowledge of this comparatively low level of amenity and would have accepted it. As such, despite not strictly according with the underlying principle of SDI, the issue of amenity is considered to be far from ideal."

What an absolute travesty of the National Planning Policy Framework, of the countless hours of work that have gone into the Local Plan and the democracy in which we all thought we lived. Standards do not matter.

Place Alliance meeting 2nd December 2015.

Summary of opening comments from Sir Terry Farrell about the progress of

the Urban Room Network(URN).

- Delighted with the success of URN
- Interesting to see different scales and types of room, urban and rural, virtual.
- Noted that the key to success is collaboration, not just between public and private sector, but universities, RIBA, etc.

- Farrells are keen to continue to champion the ongoing implementation of the review, and have had a recent meeting with Minister for Housing Brandon Lewis
- Urban Rooms have proven successful, from Cork, to Schenzhen, Shanghai, Beijing.
- HCS continues to push for the establishment of one in Hereford.

FLOWER RESCUE MISSION

Hereford in Bloom volunteers are leading, in partnership with the City Council and BID, a mission to rescue Hereford from becoming a flower free zone, following a decision by Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty to abandon planting and maintenance of flower beds on roundabouts and in the city centre. The decision to leave the beds bare (and full of weeds) would be a huge blow to the City's attempts to attract more visitors to boost the local economy. Hereford has won Gold in the Britain in Bloom competition for the last three years, a result known to increase visitor numbers by up to 17%.

For the past two years Bloom has funded the £10,000 cost of the plants and Balfour Beatty undertook the planting. Now the group, together with the City Council and BID has to raise extra cash to pay for the whole operation, and talks are underway with private companies to establish the cost of ensuring Hereford remains a 'blooming' success. The fate of the flower beds is expected early in the New Year.



Blooming High Town



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MEETINGS

15th October 2015 – Herefordshire City

Following the publication of some blue sky thinking in our Summer 2015 magazine a crowded meeting discussed some of the issues proposed. Chairman John Bothamley opened by explaining that the article was intended to inspire lateral thinking. With the Local Plan likely to be accepted at the full council meeting on the following day, John explained that as time proceeds it can be updated and supported by the local Neighbourhood Plans many of which are in preparation; he suggested the Local Plan was not sufficiently forward thinking. Following some polite criticism from a contingent of visitors from Ewyas Harold, who were upset by the idea of a much enlarged market town there and a new station at Pontrilas, the meeting went on to discuss some of the other broader issues.

Three principle parts of the report were:

- Countryside – to maintain our most valuable of assets, for tourism, agriculture and for us all to enjoy living here and to encourage businesses to relocate here.
- Transportation – to consider improvements to the main transport routes, especially the direct rail link

to London, and the possibility of light rail routes into Hereford with local parking.

- Built environment – to see historic buildings well preserved with respectful new developments integrated into the existing framework; all maintained well without the clutter we too often see, again for our own benefit and to encourage inward investment.

The meeting concluded with some agreement that alternatives, at all stages of development of the built environment, should be considered; but that when agreed the Council and amenity bodies should proceed together for the benefit of the County. This, of course, depends on clear consultation. To this end the HCS is working with others to establish an Urban Room where the past, present and future can be described.

19th November 2015 – Archaeological Projects – Tim Hoverd

A well-attended meeting enjoyed a most informative presentation by local archaeologist Tim Hoverd. A very experienced archaeologist with Herefordshire Council Tim has somehow survived the many cuts inflicted on the Council's Archaeology unit in recent years, now pretty well running the unit single handed, and with great

flair and ingenuity. He took the HCS audience on a tour of recent excavation projects at various locations around the County, all illustrated with stunning photography.

Projects shown mostly related to pre-Roman periods including the impressive construction techniques for burial chambers and a large hall type building near Dorstone. Closer to Hereford we were reminded about the size of the massive Credenhill Iron Age Hill Fort, the second largest in England. And, of course, the 2007 block buster, the "Rotherwas Serpent." Remember that? It got on the national news! A mysterious track like feature of great antiquity, apparently constructed from burnt stones. Now recorded and protected under the Rotherwas access road much remains to be discovered about this nationally important feature. Indeed this is true for the whole of Herefordshire, an amazing treasure chest of archaeological remains. Tim

Hoverd's presentation was inspirational. Put a preservation order on this Herefordshire stalwart now! BN

17th December 2015 – Herefordshire's River Trade – Heather Hurley

A most fascinating lecture full of detail together with beautiful old pictures of the Rivers Wye and Lugg. Stories of the people who worked on the river, and the barge owners who plied their trade, there were facts that surprised us all. In 1695 the several weirs were removed to enable uninterrupted passage and boat building and the transport of goods was in full sail. Barges (weighing up to 20 tons) were pulled by teams of men or horses and had a sail for the easy parts when the wind was favourable. With a length of 50 feet and a beam up to 11 feet these hulks carried coal, iron, bricks and wine up stream and timber and corn downstream. Looking at the Wye will never be the same!

YOUR OPINIONS

Ewyas Harold: an opportunity?

I do not live in the village but I do live in one of the small neighbouring villages which does not have any facilities other than a pub and a church. I rely, therefore, on Ewyas Harold for the facilities it has to offer. Over the years, I have become fond of the village and certainly would not want it to lose its character and great sense of community. I do, however, think expansion would have a lot of advantages and could be achieved without loss of either character or community spirit.

A larger population has a number of benefits. First, the school could be rebuilt on a site adjacent to the Memorial Hall, and there could be scope to improve sports' facilities for the benefit of the wider community and the Hall could be used for exciting drama and other arts' events. It would even be possible to justify the provision of a swimming pool. More children in the community would

mean the school could operate more efficiently with the children benefiting from single-year classes throughout the school. It would be viable to offer more pre-school and nursery places. Secondly, more people would mean more customers for the shops. The threat from the supermarkets is receding as people's shopping habits change. Many more people now shop on a daily basis and there is enthusiasm for independent shops providing local produce. Thirdly, it would become more viable to provide a more frequent bus service to Hereford and Abergavenny. The community transport service could then offer a good means of transporting people from the outlying villages and hamlets to Ewyas Harold to link with the public service to the major towns. There would be added justification for the re-opening of Pontrilas Railway Station. Ewyas Harold could become one of the most environmentally-friendly communities in the county.

Diana Palmer.

Sister Societies

We meet regularly and all societies welcome visitors. Information on talks and news from:

Kingston History Society

www.kingstonhistorysociety.com

Ledbury Civic Society

www.ledburycivicsociety.org

Leominster Civic Society

www.leominstercivicsociety.co.uk

Ross-on-Wye Civic Society

www.rosscivic.org.uk

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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Forthcoming Events

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

Thursday 21st January 2016

Gordon Wood, local author on the history of Herefordshire railways

The history of Herefordshire railways, with particular reference to the construction of the Hereford-Worcester line.

Thursday 18th February 2016

John Clark, Development Director at Herefordshire Wildlife Trust

Conserving wildlife in an expanding urban environment – threats and opportunities.

Thursday 17th March 2016

Ian Archer, Chief Executive of The Courtyard

The Courtyard's activities and expansion plans, including facilities for other Hereford community organisations.

NB Meeting to be held at The Courtyard – usual timings

Thursday 21st April 2016

Nigel Jeffries, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal Trust

Impressive commercial venture almost lost in history – a vision increasingly becoming reality thanks to the H&G Canal Trust.

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.

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