

FREE

Place Hereford Civic Society

The City's built environment forum

Different Opinions abound

HCS the City's forum for Built Environment

Spring 2018

HerefordBID's ideas for the City

John Jones writes commercially

Still on about the By-pass

Differing views remain

Amazing Places

Blackfriars Rose Gardens

Hereford Now

Way finding

In association with the Hereford Civic Society, you are invited to the annual public lecture



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Thursday 17th May 2018

Arrival from 7.00pm, for 7.15pm start, 8.30pm close

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PREFACE

The eagerly anticipated report from Historic England's Design Review Panel, which visited Hereford in October 2017 has just arrived as we go to print. They last came here ten years ago to review the proposals for the Edgar Street Grid. Their main purpose was to consider the proposal for Hereford to become a 'University City' and reflect on the mechanisms and changes necessary to successfully achieve that ambition. The panel emphasised the opportunity presented to the creators of University premises to design and build to a high quality, commensurate with, and complementary to the historic quality. They reflected on the 'sheer quality of buildings and townscape of the historic core' but were also quite critical.

- 3.10 (New City Link Road) looks to be a very over-engineered solution. As a result, what appears to be being created is a road which will provide a rather unpleasant pedestrian environment.
- 5.22 The sense of arrival at Hereford Station is quite awful. A decade ago.....there were plans under consideration to create a new high-quality public space in front of this rather attractive mid-nineteenth Century railway building. However, nothing has happened.
- 5.23the creation of an attractive footpath route between the station and the City Centre might also facilitate enhancement of the setting of its two most important heritage assets - Coningsby Hospital and Blackfriars' Priory.

By chance in this quarter's issue our historian, David Whitehead, suggests a pedestrian route to Coningsby Hospital from Widemarsh Street. Members of the Panel were worried that pressure to ensure delivery by Autumn 2019 of some of the buildings for the new University may lead to diminution of architectural quality.

- 5.25 the Panel were concerned that

the Council currently has no access to the expertise offered by an independent Design Review Panel.

- 5.32an urgent need for a long-term transport strategy looking at how Herefordshire Council might affect modal change and encourage people to use modes other than the private car.

Relevantly HCS is holding an event on Thursday 17th May at the University Centre which deals with the Panel's para 5.32 – see front page for details. Much else in the report refers to subjects raised by HCS over the last decade, and we worry about the ability of Councillors and Officers to actually deliver; Hereford Civic Society is urging the new Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to take notice of the sensible suggestions made in the Urban Panel Report. The full report is available from Historic England, Design Review Panel, Hereford

HCS remains the Forum for the Built Environment; on pages 4 and 5 we have different opinions on the future shape of Hereford and a short note on Neighbourhood Development Plans and democracy on Page 7! *John Bothamley*
Editor

NEWS & COMMENT

BID doing Council's work

Six years ago a project called Destination Hereford retained Amey, the predecessors of our built environment contractors Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), to map the City and make recommendations on the siting of new signage. An HCS member sat on this committee and input ideas, not least that new signage should be contemporary and not Victorian in style. Meetings and discussions, and thousands of pounds of Hereford's budget with Amey was spent upon this work to no avail.

It was of some concern to hear that Hereford BID has commissioned BBLP to undertake a similar project. HCS thought the BID was all about boosting local businesses! We are hugely impressed by the overall results and initiatives of the BID but good business, like charity, begins at home.



Chopped down!

We understand that the Council took this tree down, near Beattie Avenue, following a report that a woman had tripped here the other day. Interesting the tree gets the blame, not the Council for failing to look after the state of the pavements or the woman for not looking where she was going! Interesting too, that the Council should evidently think that by leaving the tree in this state they have addressed the hazard. Our sarcasm is meant respectfully fully understanding the complexities of maintaining a presentable street scene.

The City Link Road

With several accidents in the first three months, with no signage for cyclists (is there a cycle lane or not?) and little usage according to anecdotal reports, one wonders what happens next. We were promised a downgrading of Blueschool and Newmarket Streets (to create a Ramblas style boulevard in an early ESG report) which will encourage drivers to discover the new road.

The traffic light sequences is under review but at 7.10 on a recent Tuesday morning I was stopped at three sets of lights travelling from Edgar Street to the Station, at a time of minimal traffic. Is it fit for purpose? Last quarter we criticised the last century approach utilizing traffic lights. Now HCS is mounting a campaign for a review of the work of Balfour Beatty Living Places. Holme Lacy Road, City Link Road and St.Owen's Street suggest to us that their design work produces schemes that are not fit for purpose.



Herefordshire Sustainable Transport Group

Rail and Bus for Hereford (RBfH) is a leading member of this group which also comprises the Hereford Transport Alliance. The Group was formed from the realisation that a proposed Herefordshire relief road is not the total solution to Hereford's transport problems, in their opinion. A good, effective and efficient public transport system, plus safe cycle and pedestrian ways are vital if Herefordshire Council is to attain its vision and implement policies for a future low carbon transport system for the city. With this in mind the Group is aware that work on a sustainable internal city wide transport system needs to be started now whilst a bypass/relief road is still debated. Therefore, work has begun, with outside professional help, on the design of an electric bus network for the city and the possibility for a light tram route. Early days yet but RBfH is at the forefront of not only helping sustain our current services but ensuring exciting development projects are given a fair hearing. Watch this space.

Consortium confirmed for LA cycling plans

Independent transport planning consultancy Phil Jones Associates has been appointed to a consortium

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RIBA

Contributors

Nick Boles – Former Conservative Minister

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

John Jones – Founder Chairman HerefordBID

Jeremy Milln – Archaeological conservation consultant

Stanley Vincent – Planning visionary

David Whitehead – Hereford historian and author

Design & Layout - Gary Nozedar

Front Cover

Weeping Window at Hereford Cathedral – Paul Cummins and Tom Piper

NEWS & COMMENT

with engineering consultancies WSP and Mott Macdonald to support the development of the first local cycling and walking infrastructure. A team of project managers will support 35 local authorities that have been awarded assistance by the Department for Transport (DfT) including Herefordshire. The plans form part of the government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, which aims to making cycling and walking the natural choice for short journeys. The three specialist companies have been appointed to the project by the DfT following their previous work producing guidance and involvement in Highways England's Cycling, Safety and Integration programme. Parsons Brinckerhoff, now part of WSP, were responsible for the work in Holme Lacy Road giving HCS great cause for concern – see comment about the City Link Road.

Phase Two

Our extravagant Council start replacement of paving in Commercial Street in May 2018. We hope that Balfour's work (BBLP) will be of a higher standard than that done by Amey less than ten years ago; but when a company designs, builds and supervises its own work HCS continues to worry.

Friends of Blackfriars Rose Gardens

Fifty years ago the Hereford & West of England Rose Society donated a rose garden to the City of Hereford.

The rose garden lies between the Coningsby Hospital & Museum and the ruins of the Blackfriars monastery on Widemarsh Street. Near the Old Market, this peaceful site welcomes visitors and Herefordians alike. See David Whiterhead's article on Page 6 with a great vision.

Enough is enough

Plans for Hereford's new bus hub at the station are slowly moving forward. This strategy is being developed in three phases by consultant WSP in its Basingstoke office. Phase I, development of Brief, is complete. Phase II, analysis and network proposals is in draft. Phase III, recommendations on the hub itself, is expected in December 2018. BBLP is preparing a design for the temporary bus hub on the site of the permanent facility. Apparently the intention is that the temporary facility will be in use no later than the start of Hay Festival on 25th May. It will include surfacing, islands and shelters. The intention is to minimise the amount of abortive work overall. Merton Meadow carpark has had a cinder surface for years. When Rockfield was demolished the area was beautifully surfaced as a temporary carpark, part of which has now been taken up for the new City Link Road. Now we are having another temporary, full on tarmaced situation in front of the station – HCS suggests this is entirely unnecessary, and wasteful of resources, and why does it take all year to get a design? It is time for a review of the contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places.



New student village scheme

Specialist developer Crown Student Living has unveiled outline proposals for a 15-storey student village in Swansea Docks, involving 620 bed spaces, a cinema and associated communal facilities. The developer's architects have promised to create "a contemporary, striking and elegant building with crisp lines and subtle tonal variations to offer an architectural statement and gateway building to this important coastal site". Here's hoping NMITE's design will match this one – but not in height! HCS are pressing for a height limit in the Hereford Area Plan.

Twentieth Century Society

Coventry will be UK City of Culture in 2021, but the Society is concerned

at how many of its post-war buildings and art works may be lost before then. C20 Society and Historic England are challenging redevelopment in the town centre which would put the Upper Precinct, Bull Yard, City Arcade, Grade II listed station and a listed William Mitchell mural under threat. Good luck to Coventry with their success as City of Culture

John Jones

The inspirational chairman and founder of Hereford BID, stepped down at the end of March. Persuading umpteen businesses to part with additional rate payments for an improved environment has been a long haul. But results are proving his idea was one to back and Hereford is certainly in a better state now. A hugely creditable chunk of hard work has paid off. Well done to John for the idea but greater thanks for delivering.

HEREFORD NOW

Way finding

Two pieces of iron work have recently joined the plethora of street clutter in our City's streets. But these are different, an initiative of the Hereford BID, one being a contemporary styled sign post and one an oversized monolith with maps and large logo. These are intended to help visitors find their way around the City and have been sited in Broad Street as examples of what could be erected throughout the City. Of course the BID asked for comments. HCS commented that too much information on finger posts can confuse

and prefers distances shown rather than envisaged time it might take an average person!

The monolith is gross and is more about the designer's Hereford logo (do we need another one?) than informative maps; observers have already arrived here, and want local directional information. We much prefer the design of the slim columns, little more than a foot wide, erected in many cities across the country. See picture below. However this project is hugely creditable in that it inspires cross City movement.



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CITY CENTRE

Creating the conditions for Hereford to thrive

We are lucky to have a city with a fantastic historic core, that is rightly protected and preserved, so the charm of what is a quintessentially English market town remains. The area inside the historic city wall, has seen next to no commercial building developments delivered in the last 30 years, and to some extent this is a positive, as new has not been allowed to destroy old. Inside the wall the last project of any real consequence was the building of the Left Bank, which is a great building, but it was not a commercially viable development, and was completed only because it was a pet project for a local billionaire. Prior to that the previous project of any significance was Maylord Orchards over 30 years ago, which again has not been a commercial success.

In that time other projects have often been proposed, stalled, and eventually gone away. The reason for this is simple; commercially they are not viable. The value of retail and residential property in the city centre is low, meaning the returns developers can make are not sufficient for them to turn a profit, so projects never get delivered. The failure to get Chadds redeveloped, and the long-term failure to rebuild the fire site in High Town are testament to this. Developers often find their projects trapped in a toxic triangle; getting building regulations, conservation consent and commercial viability to all align on a project generally proves impossible. Over the last 30 years a slow pace of development has been just about acceptable, over the next decade a similarly challenging environment for developers will cause permanent long-term decline for the city centre. The reality is that cultural changes in

the way we all shop mean we simply won't need the same volume of space for service sector and retail businesses on the high street anymore. We need to create the right environment for developers to bring to fruition commercially viable projects, that are sympathetic to the existing fabric of the areas they are in, but that give purpose to buildings that otherwise would not be needed. If we fail to create this environment the result will be a city centre that very rapidly loses purpose, leading to areas of empty shops and unused offices.

As a minimum we will need to allow for development of fit for purpose car-parking on the fringe of the city and conversion of former retail and service sector space in secondary locations to leisure, office or residential space. If we wish the university to be a success we also have to create the conditions in which they can develop the required buildings without undue delay. Much of



- Green shaded areas should be considered for large, fit for purpose retail units. Mostly in locations that replace, smaller, old and poor quality units.
- Yellow areas for office space and University teaching & accommodation space.

this is beyond the control of the local authority, but the chance presented in the drafting of the Hereford Area Plan must be taken to do what can be done, to ensure that we have a city centre that still has a purpose in the coming

decades. Failure to be proactive and get ahead of the decline, will only see a sharper and more widespread decline.

*John Jones,
ex-chairman of Hereford BID*

PRE-CONSULTATION

St. Owen's, Street

This HCS initiative came about following a poor consultation process over the refurbishment of High Town. Our suggestion was for a small group of local people representing various organisations, shopkeepers, cyclists etc. to meet for an intensive couple of hours trying to highlight the possible areas of concern before proposals went out for full statutory consultation; with no one individual attempting to over-rule the opinions of the rest of the group.

The first meeting about the Contra Flow arrangements for St. Owen's Street was a success and the proceedings well summarised. Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) then returned to the drawing board and tidied up the alternative schemes taking note of the comments made.

The consultation panels were displayed in the Town Hall and there was some feedback from the public. The group then met again in February to further discuss the results of the public's comments, which were analysed in some depth by BBLP although the numbers replying was small. Further discussion ensued and there was even suggestion that a difficult part of the scheme should be dropped!

The Pre-consultation idea was supposed to iron out the small deficiencies and ease the process of consultation in a simple and informative manner. Pages of reports from BBLP to remind the committee of what they had said was not necessary, nor was there a need to call these volunteers back for further discussion, leading to further delay and cost. Too much weight was placed on the partisan views of the few who responded, and now we wait for councillors to decide when, and

whether, the works will commence. The glaring omission in the current proposals is that the materials do not follow the Hereford Streetscape Strategy of 2009 which was adopted by the Cabinet; and worse, a choice of routes going west "for those less confident cyclists there will be an alternative route via Mill Street". Every route should be fit for all cyclists.



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A BYPASS FOR HEREFORD

Is it worth it?

Put it where you like, call it what you will, relief, link or bypass roads for Hereford have always been fraught. More than 3000 responded to the consultation on a corridor to the west of the City, now as heavily promoted by Hereford Council as it once did an eastern route; its volte face precipitated rather more by the temptation of a vast house building bonanza unleashed on greenfield land, than concern for the Lugg Fritillaries.

According to the glossy brochure city centre congestion would be eased, jobs created at the Enterprise Zone, a world class university delivered and five minutes shaved from a journey on the A49, if we get a western by-pass. Yet the Consultants' own studies show that around 85% of traffic in Hereford is short trip or destination, so to spend c£200m on a road for the 15% passing through won't solve congestion and any marginal saving would be wiped out by projected growth. Nothing in the excellent talk Neil Kerr gave HCS about the HEZ backed up the Council's enthusiasm for such a bypass or its promise of delivering jobs to Rotherwas. Nothing in the literature of the nascent university makes this link. And as for the five minutes, so what. Only petrol-

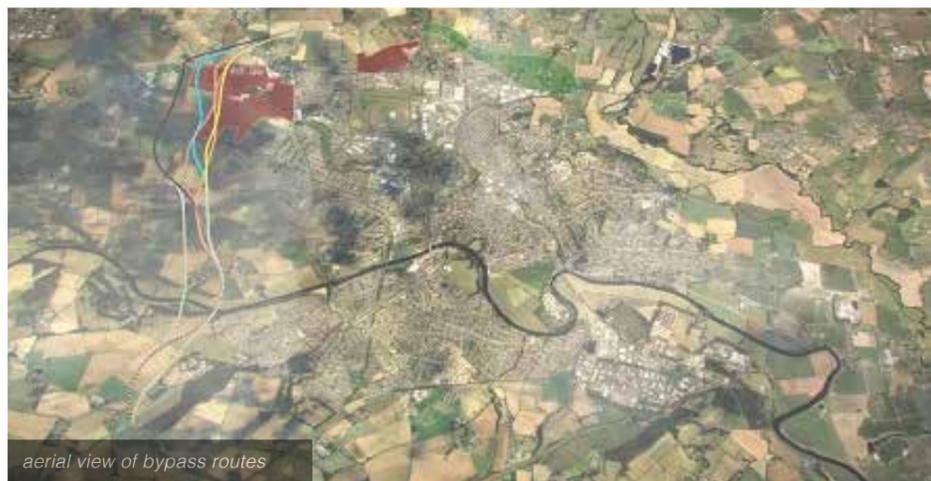
heads, fond of whizzing up & down the Rotherwas road will applaud that. The recent CPRE report *The end of the road* published March 2017, reveals that road-building is failing to provide the congestion relief and economic boost promised.

This is what the scheme imperils:

- Belmont Abbey
- River Wye at Warham
- Jubilee Meadow, Community Farm and medieval settlement site
- Miles of prime farmland, including the Woodland Trust's Drovers' Wood
- Homes on the Kings Acre Road and Roman Road's ancient archaeology

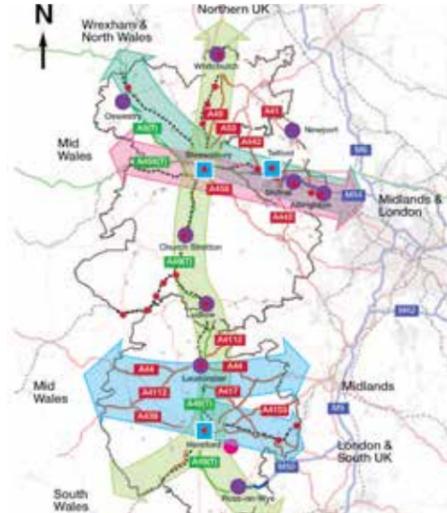
Jeremy Milln

So what is the alternative? Contribute your views and we will publish them alongside Jeremy's in our next edition.

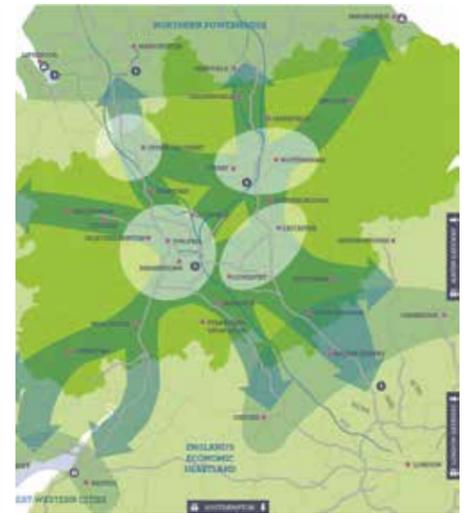


An alternative view

The tribulations over the bypass continue and HCS members are divided on the subject. Many committee members are opposed to it. Statistics and traffic modelling are easy to play with to underwrite one's hoped for outcome; but what is indisputable is the inability of most of us to consider the big picture.



Have you noticed in recent publicity the inclusion of MC – Midlands Connect – logo? This quango worries about transport issues between the Midlands conurbations including from here to Birmingham and across to Hull. But their bosses are confused when it comes to explaining their policies. Consider the two diagrams shown; both published by the same organisation. The one on the right is worried about movement within their area, the one on the left about movement across the western section to the north and to the south. Now if we consider a country wide plan, (no room for another image), it seems pretty clear to me that the crowded and always



busy M5/M6 corridor needs attention. Always busy and yet an essential artery for the west of the country. Bear in mind also the impressive and hugely expensive Head of the Valleys road from South Wales road running across to Abergavenny, and the logical route north via the A465 around Hereford and on to the A49. Piecemeal works to impediments like the traffic lights south of Pontrilas would make this a safe and helpful north/south corridor. Together with the benefit of no through heavy traffic in central Hereford, the hoped for boom in cycling will come about and all will be enjoying fresher air and good exercise. Stanley Vincent

CITY WALLS

At last a support group

Members will remember the fascinating picture-led talk about the City Walls which Derek Foxtan gave the Society on 21st September 2017, and now they are back in the news. The condition of Hereford's walls is unfavourably compared to those of other walled cities and that currently the provision for public access and interpretation is very low, given the City's pitch to be a tourist destination. Hereford's ancient walls define the historic city and ought to be as iconic a part of it as the Cathedral or Castle Green but for many they remain hidden in plain sight.

So what is news? There is to be some badly needed weeding of the fabric of the Council-owned sections this year, and is welcome, but this needs to be followed up by conservation: that is stitching, pointing, replacement of decayed stones and capping repair. We do now have a working group - which includes representatives from Rural Media, Hereford BID, the Civic Society and both Councils - on the case. Divided ownership, poor physical

access and lack of funding present considerable challenges to this large and complex project. We beg your patience and support. Looking further ahead we may start to realise some of the vision for the walls and their gates which Derek shared with us, particularly in the West Street, Bath Street and Gaol Street areas which have become so degraded by car parks.

Jeremy Milln



eign gate imagined by jason hodges

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AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD

The Blackfriars Rose Gardens

With many shoppers and visitors crossing Newmarket Street to the Old Market precinct, it is time to flag-up the triple attraction to be found less than 100 yards down Widemarsh Street. Without – namely, the chapel built in the early 13th century by the Knights of St John, now a museum; the remains of the cloister of the Dominican Friars with its preaching cross, and much later, the hospital founded by Thomas Coningsby of Hampton Court in 1614. In the past few tourists have made this trip since it is so far away from the principal focus of historic Hereford – the Cathedral. But now they are likely to shop and eat well-away from the centre of the city and close to the Coningsby complex.

The short trip down Widemarsh Street Without – as it used to be called – is not unattractive since the traditional streetscape of small shops still exists, albeit late 20th century fragmentation quickly develops after the Coningsby Hospital. In fact, there is no persuasive reason why the street could not be pedestrianised above the Blackfriars Street/Coningsby Street junction. With good street furniture, suitable surfacing, trees, flower-beds and hanging baskets in the summer, Widemarsh Street Without could become quite charming and quickly attract the sort of shops that have recently sprung-up in Widemarsh Street Within.

The terminus point for this promenade would, of course, be the Blackfriars Rose Gardens, embedded in their historic location. The present gardens were established in 1964 when 220 roses were donated by the Hereford and West of England Rose Society, which had been founded in Hereford in 1867 by John Cranston of the Kings Acre Nursery (now Wyevale). This, in turn, had spawned the National Rose Society and the gift in 1964 was organised on their behalf by Harry

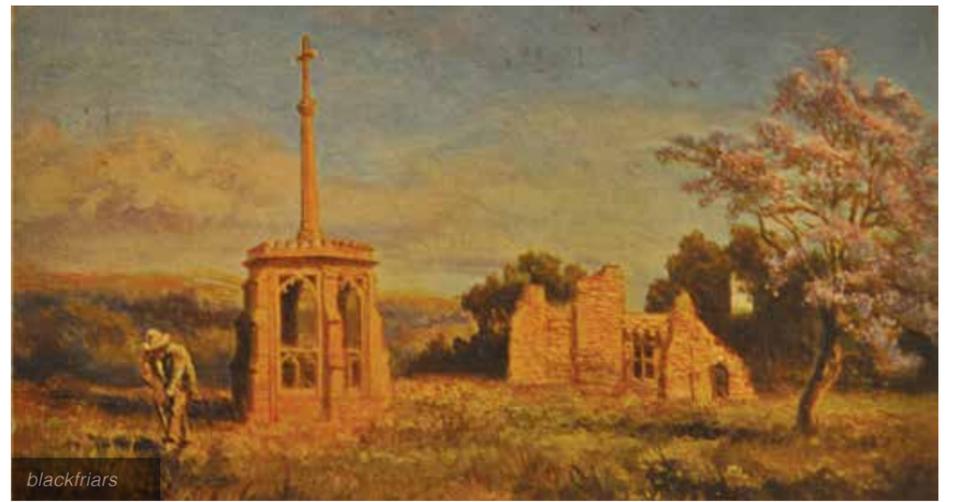
Williamson, the founder of Wyevale. The City Council became the guardians of the new rose garden but recently with 'cuts' only very basic maintenance has been carried out and a mere handful of the roses continue to thrive, notwithstanding that several of them were sponsored by rosarians from all over the world.

Into this hiatus steps Anne Harbour and the local members of The Arts Society (formerly NADFAS), who, with the consent of the Council, have with great expedition spent the autumn tidying-up and pruning the surviving roses and when the winter weather interrupted this, gathered at the Hereford Archive Centre at Rotherwas to research the history of the site. The details above were gleaned by them from the minute books of the now defunct West of England Rose Society. Their ambition is to return the garden to its 1960's climax and make it worth visiting. Rose growers will appreciate that this is no small task and will require the wholesale replacement of the existing soil to avoid 'rose-sickness'.

There is also great potential here for developing a new understanding of

the history of the site. The religious institutions have been well-studied but a forgotten aspect of the site is its re-colonisation after the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-40) by Thomas Coningsby of Hampton Court as a town house. Coningsby was a significant figure in the late Elizabethan court; he was a close friend of the Protestant hero and poet, Philip Sydney and related to him by marriage. Like Sydney, he was a star of the medieval tournaments that Elizabeth revived and in real-life one of the commanders of the siege of Rouen (1591-2), which was occupied by the Spanish and where Coningsby received his knighthood from Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's favourite. Coningsby was thus, at the centre of the Elizabethan Renaissance and visited

Italy in 1573 with Sydney and was a patron of the prolific poet, John Davies, who helped promote the cult of the 'Virgin Queen'. Coningsby would have attended Shakespeare's plays – and, probably those of Marlow and Jonson – and his house in Widemarsh Street would have reflected this highpoint in English culture. English Heritage has exploited these sorts of connections with great success at Kenilworth Castle by creating an Elizabethan garden and making it one of their most frequently visited sites in England. Something similar here, but on a smaller scale, would make it worthwhile for visitors to walk down the embellished promenade from High Town. The volunteers are in place and it just needs the vision to be articulated. *David Whitehead*



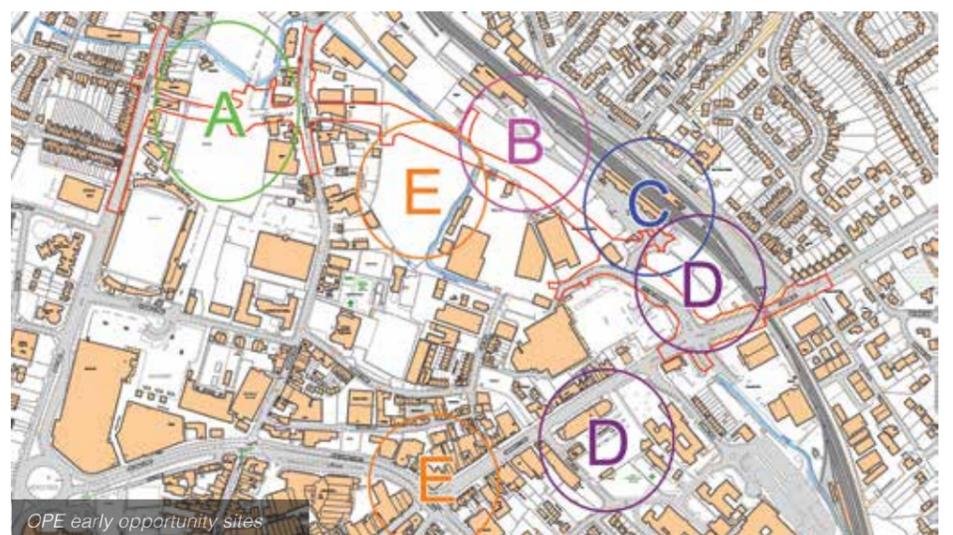
Square Deal on Housing

Former Tory minister Nick Boles published his complete works of square deals in February as a slim book. The chapter on Housing is such common sense, and aligns with Labour Party policy, that the enhanced value of development land should accrue to society and not the lucky landowner.

"We should move towards the system that operates in Germany, which I first got to know when, as planning minister, I visited some of the superb new extensions to the city of Freiburg in 2013. There, local councils take the lead in acquiring land for major developments and putting in the necessary basic infrastructure – roads, sewers and utilities as well as parks and schools – before selling off serviced plots so that private developers can start building houses. They have the power to purchase land compulsorily at a value that relates to its current use and not its future use as a development site. As a result, councils are able to capture most of the increase in land value and use the money to fund the infrastructure that unlocks sites for development and offers benefits to the wider community.

To introduce a similar system in

England, we will have to change our laws on compulsory purchase, specifically the 1961 Land Compensation Act, and give local councils (and their development corporations) the power to buy land at its 'current use value', if it is going to be used to meet the community's need for housing or other kinds of development. It would be a mistake to restrict the new powers to brownfield sites, as was proposed in the last Conservative manifesto, as large urban extensions will usually involve a mixture of brownfield and greenfield land. Instead we should seek cross-party support for a broad reform to the land market which ensures that the interests of the community in meeting housing need and maintaining high quality infrastructure are balanced against the rights of landowners to receive fair value for their property". *N Boles*



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PLANNING MATTERS

In March Minister Dominic Raab said: "Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) are a powerful tool to help communities shape their local area, making sure the right homes are built in the right places. It's vital that communities have the right support and advice available to help deliver a plan that meets their own ambitious aspirations."

With 365 neighbourhood plans finalised using support provided by the government the maximum grant available has been increased by £2,000 to £17,000, helping communities to access more resources to develop a plan for their area. Herefordshire has more NDPs than any other county. HCS remains critical of the approach by Herefordshire Council which has encouraged every last parish to have its own plan. In the Golden Valley five parishes sensibly gathered together to produce a comprehensive NDP only to have it ignored by the planning committee.



Where is democracy?

Last quarter we reported on the planning application at Middle Common Piggery – Lower Maescoed (172704). Here the NDP was over-ridden by the planning committee on a vote of 10 in favour and four against. HCS emailed all members of the committee seeking their comments and received some replies including some interesting conversations.

Current state of the site

"The site in question is an ugly and abandoned pig farm" This suggests creating an eyesore assists an application.

"noting the extent of 'out of use' concrete and corrugated iron / asbestos roofing materials throughout the redundant site and the extensive access / egress to the site, it made sense to agree the professional Planning Officers recommendation for Approval." Respectfully we would query the professionalism of a Planning Officer who gives validity to citing the current state of a site as a reason to support a new use.

Fear of costs against the Council

"there's no doubt that had we (refused the application) the applicant would have taken the matter to appeal" Professional consultants and multiple

reports appear to frighten committee members into submission. These reports failed to detail the realistic costs of remediation which were part of the case to justify higher numbers than the NDP.

"we would almost certainly have lost, probably with costs awarded against the Council" what about the time costs of volunteers preparing the NDP and the loss of respect for politicians caused by ignoring due process.

Little Community consultation

"there was concern about the fact that there had been little or no involvement with the local community/parish council" a strong case for the Council in an appeal situation.

Over development

"It was felt to be over development of the site, and out of character with the settlement pattern" Sounds like a legitimate case for refusal.

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Bullied?

"I voted for Approval at Committee after a considerable debate lasting 45 minutes where key elements and cost of clearing the site + safe disposal and or reuse of materials as and where possible v 3 replacement properties only!" Persuaded by consultants – what were the forecast costs?

HCS Summary

We are exasperated that our planning process remains so muddled, so administratively heavy and often not serving our communities' best interests. Until the ridiculous land supply levels are sorted there is often little defence against the imprecisely defined "sustainable" criteria required of the NPPF. Reluctantly I suggest that involvement in NDPs is largely a waste of time. What an indictment of our so called democracy. *John Bothamley*

Mini-Holland in Waltham Forest (LBWF)

In 2013, all 18 outer London boroughs were invited to apply for funding from the Mayor of London's Mini-Hollands fund and Waltham Forest was selected to share the pot of money.

Since then LBWF have used this funding to upgrade their streets and road network to help tackle key issues surrounding road safety, air quality and public health. "Mini-Holland" is one of many projects underway to make LBWF safer for walking and cycling and is made up of a total of 13 schemes.

Legal Stuff

Legislation requires all councils to have a Local Plan in place and Herefordshire Council's was adopted in Autumn 2015, ahead of many of the country's councils. NDPs are intended to be locally developed by the Big Society of local people putting some detail on preferences and detailing areas for future development. NDPs have to align with the policies of the adopted Local Plan (LP). Then we have the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), recently revised, which essentially inspires all sustainable development when there is no Local Plan in place. The LP will, of course, need to also be aligned to the principles of the NPPF. However there is further directive from central government that insists all authorities have a five year land supply for housing. Herefordshire fails on this test, although there is argument about the basis of calculation. So the NPPF kicks in and any sustainable development is valid; albeit the definition of sustainability relies on expensive arguments between consultants!

HELP

We could do with a bit of help emailing members and updating our web site – not onerous and be great to hear.

Please contact David Fowler
01981 541058
david693fowler@btinternet.com



Steven Thomas of Watkins Thomas

Steven Thomas first joined the company in 1987, and became Director of Watkins Thomas Ltd in 2012. Born in Hereford in 1964, Steve graduated with a BSc. in Estate Management in 1986; is a Fellow of the National Association of Estate Agents (FNAEA) and a Member of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (MARLA).

5 King Street, Hereford HR4 9BW

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01432 272280

MEETINGS

Thursday 18th January 2018 Great Places

Dave Marshall and Roger Morgan entertained us with a fascinating run through of our bid for City of Culture, inspired by the results for Hull. With 18 museums in Herefordshire, nearly all volunteer run, and many artists and creative people we're already "cultural"; but need to talk more about it, exchange ideas and stimulate participation. The failed bid, according to DCMS, was because we are a bit remote and a bit small but this inspired the two, and their team of interested people, to bid for Great Places, winning funding of seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds over three years, from the Heritage Lottery Board. Only 17 out of 120 applications were successful.

With three staff leading the project we can all look forward to much more culture, especially with Dave and Roger inspiring us all.

Thursday 15th February 2018 Humphry Repton in Herefordshire

David Whitehead brought in the crowds again with facts and knowledge of this most famous of all landscape architects.

Thursday 15th March 2018 Skylon Park

Neil Kerr enthused about progress on the Enterprise Zone and it was good to have positive latest news.

NB Brief reports on past meetings from now on – far better to attend and hear for yourselves!

YOUR OPINIONS

Tweeting London

On a recent London visit this outdoor screen was spied showing the latest mood of real time tweets in the capital. Not least there is a similarity in the shape of Greater London and Herefordshire! Let's have a mega screen in High Town – who would like to fund it? Ideal for sharing national events and providing local news.



SUMMER OUTING

Saturday 14th July 2018

Coach departs Merton Meadow car park @ 9.00am. Return 6.30pm.

Newport Transporter Bridge. The oldest transporter bridge in Britain and the largest of eight such bridges still in operation worldwide. We will use the "bridge" to cross the River Usk, visit the museum, explore the winding house and for those with a head for heights, climb the tower to gantry level.

Social housing project at Bassaleg from the seventies, a drive by of this most unusual layout and hoped for internal view of one of the homes.

Tredegar House (a cold buffet for those who have pre-ordered, otherwise there is a cafe and gardens/ parkland for those planning to bring a picnic).

Private guided tour of this 17th-century Charles II-era mansion.

Cost £18 including all entrance charges or £28 to also include lunch (quiche, mixed salads, sliced ham, bread roll and tea/ coffee)

On the day, bring with you your National Trust Membership card; non members tell David as, on your behalf, we can apply for a FREE National Trust entry pass from Civic Voice.

Early Booking essential before 30th June please (with payment) by contacting: David Fowler 01981 541058, david693fowler@btinternet.com or see him at a Civic Society event or write: Stable Cottage, Kingsthorne, Herefordshire, HR2 8AJ



transporter bridge newport

Forthcoming Events

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

Thursday 19th April 2018

Brian Hatton - The Harrow and the Plough. Robin Thorndyke will review the work of Hereford's renowned and talented artist. A large collection of his work is in the custodianship of the County Museum Service.

Thursday 17th May 2018

Annual Lecture. Upcycling Cycling How Hereford Can Integrate Cycling into our Everyday Lives

NB hosted at the Hereford University Centre, Folly Lane, Hereford HR1 1LS 7pm, for 7.15pm start and 8.30pm close

See panel on Front Page

Thursday 18th June 2017

Karen Usher – Lead on NMiTE – the very latest plans for our new university including proposed sites for new buildings.

Saturday 14th July 2017

Annual Study Day – see adjacent on this page

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☎ 01981 541058

🌐 david693fowler@btinternet.com

Join By Cash

Pay at one of our meetings.

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Send a cheque and your details including address, phone and email address to

David Fowler, Stable Cottage, Kingsthorne, Hereford HR2 8AJ

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Jesse Norman MP – Highways Minister



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