

Priceless

# Place

## Hereford

Civic Society

The City's built  
environment forum

## Blueschool House – an Outrage

Autumn 2016

### Planning matters – we need better decisions

Difficult decisions on gated estates and cycling  
infrastructure

### What good Consultation looks like

An urgent need to get it right

### City of Culture Bid

We have a sporting chance

### Hereford Now

Nothing new

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## PREFACE



**We lost our fight to persuade the Planning Committee that the proposed cladding of Blueschool House is inappropriate on our principal boulevard. A full**

**report is on page 2 supplement, it will be an eyesore if not a carbuncle. But the reason for our wrath is that almost every member of the committee condemned it, Steve Kerry (Hereford City Council) and myself absorbing the emotion in the Shire**

**Hall thinking we had persuaded them; and then they voted in favour! In spite of Cllr. Baker insisting there is no inappropriate political whipping on the Council.**

We are losing our cool with Balfour Beatty Living Spaces and the designs and work they manage to produce. See page 6 for James Copeland's critique of the alleged improvements on the Holme Lacy Road. James' comments are not those of a whinger who moans about every project – the work is not up to the best that is being executed across the country by enlightened engineers. In our view the operation of the BBLP contract needs to be called in by our

Overview and Scrutiny Committee. I'm not prepared to consider, in detail, the proposed counter flow cycle lane on St Owen's Street because it is the third (at least) consultation and what I have seen already suggests it is invalid. So I am asking all members and readers, who agree with what we are writing, to ask their local councillor to hold to task their colleagues who, in my personal view, are responsible for

- Political intervention in planning decisions
- The consultation processes our Council use
- The contractual relationship and

competency of our Public Realm Contract.

I'm disappointed to write like this, but at the Society we all try to do our best stimulating discussion, coming up with ideas (see page 7) and being positive about Hereford; only to be let down by our councillors.

Again we have a supplement because we have so much to share, but this comes at a cost and we need more financial support from new advertisers please. With our sophisticated and thinking readership this has to be a good bet.

*John Bothamley*

## NEWS & COMMENT

### Wandsworth saves pubs

Wandsworth Council has announced pioneering proposals to remove permitted development rights from some 120 of the south west London borough's most popular and iconic bars by using Article 4 Directions. The council is thought to be the first local authority in the country to deploy directions on this scale and expects its example to be followed by other local planning authorities.

Wandsworth claimed that "an alarming number of local inns" including many viable and thriving business had been

converted into other uses with councils powerless to stop this process as owners had 'permitted development rights' allowing them to make the change without the need for planning permission.

The Conservative led council said the recent spread of mini-supermarkets has exacerbated the problem, with the major chains competing all over the country to find new premises and often choosing to convert pubs rather than taking over existing retail units. Let's do it here.



### Labyrinth Proposal

There is an idea to place a Labyrinth in the Bishop's Meadow. Labyrinths have an ancient history and are popular today for meditation, recreation and spiritual exploration. The design of this labyrinth is inspired by the drawing of one on the Mappa Mundi, which remains in Hereford Cathedral. This design is similar to one on the floor of Chartres Cathedral made around the same time in the 13th Century. More information about this unusual and intriguing project from [mikebooth@suntraps.net](mailto:mikebooth@suntraps.net)



### Balfour Beatty

Parish Councils have been informed by Balfour Beatty that if they want a traffic amendment – a TRO – which needs Highways Authority approval then it will take about two years, unless the Parish Council is prepared to pay £4,000 for action within 3 months. Welcome to the banana republic. Time for an independent review of the relationship between Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty Living Spaces and Parsons Brinkerhoff. Lobby your local councillor.



### All Saints

What was Bill Sewell thinking about when he erected this knife and fork outside All Saints' church? Far too much clutter there with posts and barriers and across much of the City – is a campaign needed?

### RTPI "reforms undermining planning"

Deep budget cuts and continual changes in planning policy have stripped public sector planners of the powers and resources to perform leadership and coordinating roles, "especially in Herefordshire" adds HCS. The Royal Town Planning Institute's report "Delivering the Value of Planning" highlighted the fact that deep budget cuts and continual changes in planning policy over the last 30 years have stripped public sector planners of the powers and resources to perform leadership and coordinating roles. The report said the planning reforms of the last decade had resulted in a system that was more complicated,

### Contributors

**Abigail Appleton** – Principal, Hereford College of Arts  
**John Bothamley** – Chairman HCS, developer and chair of charitable grant making trust  
**Mo Burns** – HCS membership secretary  
**James Copeland** – master planner and architect  
**John Faulkner** – Retired chartered civil engineer, chairman of HCS 2003-2006  
**Perry Walker** – Fellow, New Economics Foundation  
**David Whitehead** – Hereford historian and author  
**Design & Layout** – Gary Nozedar  
**Front Cover**  
 Inspiration for something like this on Bishop' Meadow. *Photographer unknown.*

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## NEWS & COMMENT

and more uncertain, and which had a reduced ability to ensure that development was well-planned and connected to transport and facilities. The legacy was also a narrower range and number of affordable housing to rent or buy.

RTPI president Phil Williams said: "For too long planning has been relegated to a reactive, bureaucratic function, instead of being able to plan strategically to drive development, jobs and growth."

### Right to Buy (RTB)

The number of homes sold under RTB in England that councils have been able to start replacing fell by more than a quarter last year with national restrictions increasingly hampering their ability to build, the Local Government Association has warned. Councils only keep a third of all receipts from sold RTB homes and further complex rules and restrictions mean councils are struggling to rapidly replace them. When is Government going to understand this most basic tenet of economic theory?

### Compulsory Purchase

The Government has started to make the Compulsory Purchase system a more effective and useable regeneration tool. The need to deliver sustainable development in a meaningful time frame has never been greater. The devolution of power and funding to local bodies is strengthening this objective, giving choice to local authorities to embrace the private sector to deliver development with a new freedom. Making CPO clearer and consistent in its use; setting more defined, shorter timescales and allowing more accurate determination of costs, with a less contentious compensation system; should encourage greater use of CPO as an effective site assembly tool. Herefordshire Council must consider this once they have a proper plan for the City. If only the burnt out buildings in High Town had been CPO'd years ago.



### £20m for new stations

The next round of the new stations fund will provide up to 75% of the cost for construction of new stations or to reopen previously closed stations. The funding will improve access to the rail network and create new travel, employment and housing opportunities. It follows on from an initial round of funding, which has already made a major difference to passengers' journeys, with new stations at Newcourt in Devon and Pye Corner in Wales. Is this the moment for the HCS proposal of opening up Pontrilas station? With a mid November deadline I fear our Council will not consider.

### Birmingham conservation

The historic fabric of some areas is now 'in crisis' as the LA has been forced to scrap several conservation areas because it cannot enforce regulations within them anymore. A further six areas are also deemed to be "at risk" as buildings are modified or left to fall into disrepair, a report to the council's Conservation and Heritage Panel has revealed.

The council has also reduced the number of specialist conservation officers from seven to two in recent years but they still have responsibility for overseeing some 2,000 listed buildings and 30 conservation areas. We have previously reported on a similarly dire situation here.

### Neighbourhood Planning Bill

Government has just launched consultations on further changes to

the neighbourhood planning regime and improving the use of planning conditions. When are we going to stop this relentless march of legislation? These regulations impinge on the huge number of volunteers trying to contribute to the future of their neighbourhoods; Herefordshire has far too many plans covering very small areas. What happens in adjacent areas affects the aspirations of others, the HC should have provided better guidance. It is all becoming too complicated. A40-home development in Sussex has been allowed on appeal by Communities Secretary Sajid Javid, who acknowledged that the scheme wasn't in accordance with either the development plan or the neighbourhood plan. Yet another example of ignoring local opinion and hundreds of hours of volunteer time creating the plan. When are politicians going to start respecting localism?

### Rural Site Allocation

With many parishes believed not to be actively pursuing their NPs a second and equally valid approach to neighbourhood planning is a Rural Site Allocation DPD (Development Plan Document). It is suitable for those parishes which are not preparing a NP, or parishes which are not achieving sufficient progression from a designation of a neighbourhood area. The DPD will only include the setting of settlement boundaries and site allocations (for housing development) and other topic areas will default to the policies set out in the Herefordshire

Local Plan. The DPD will be a consolidated document produced by Herefordshire Council and consultation will be undertaken in line with the SCI (Statement of Community Involvement). Herefordshire Council's Neighbourhood Planning Team will do some of the work. With our politicians continuing to overrule NPs there seems little point in having one. When are politicians going to understand this sort of action makes them even more disliked and, worse, creates an uncomfortable relationship between those, like HCS, who try and work with the establishment.

### Park homes boost?

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 identifies residential caravans as an additional type of housing for the first time, having a role in contributing towards the supply of housing. More work for our Local Authority who will need to start forward planning for the provision of park homes – increasing the prospects that new park home applications will be given planning approval.



## HEREFORD NOW

### Nothing!

For years we have published a photograph of a new building or refurbishment that has caught our eye, usually positively. This quarter, to mark the planning consent given to the Council by its own Planning Committee,

for the alleged updating of Blueschool House we show nothing. (see comment on our supplement page) Where is civic pride? We fear what else the planning committee might approve.

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# CITY OF CULTURE

It's almost a year since Abigail Appleton moved to Hereford to become Principal of Hereford College of Arts, and in a year full of fresh challenge and adventure, the project that combines them most intensely is Hereford's bid for City of Culture 2021. She feels passionately about the bid because she cares about the future of her new home, and winning City of Culture would transform the fortunes of the whole region not just the city at the heart of the bid. The UK City of Culture title is awarded every four years by government and recognises the role that culture can play in delivering significant social and economic benefits. It's not a prize for existing cultural achievement, but goes to a city that makes a compelling case that a year in the spotlight, with all the funding and sponsorship opportunities ensuing, will be genuinely transformational.

To stand any chance of winning we must demonstrate we have a distinctive vision for the year long programme, that we will embrace both innovation and excellence and that we will work brilliantly with local and national partners. The bid assessors will want to see a strategy for increasing tourism and infrastructure to go with it. They will want to see legacy in employment and educational impacts. Plus, they will want real creative ambition, and an aspiration to engage people from all groups in society in the programme. Our bid is led by a dynamic coalition of arts, education, business, and cultural representatives chaired by the determined Chairman of The Courtyard Centre for the Arts, Roger Morgan. When I joined, a number of working groups around different arts had already been formed from volunteers. These are a fantastic seedbed for ideas, although the eventual programme will need to cross genres and challenge boundaries. Themes are emerging

around tradition and innovation, the energy and tension of border country, the engagement of city and country, the culture of food and farming and some specific ideas that would bring world class musicians, artists and performers to our county. In a number of ways our bid is truly distinctive. Unlike larger cities Hereford has a real relationship with market towns and villages and the bid is being developed in collaboration and on behalf of the whole county. We have the support of Herefordshire Council but they are not able to bankroll the bid; the bid team is working with virtually no resources and drawing on the in-kind help of contributing organisations. Though this makes it hard to realise the marketing many people expect, it represents the powerful grassroots energy and resilience that underpins much of the county's existing cultural activity. We're delighted to have recently received a grant from the Elmley Foundation to

improve the website and are looking for other funders as we develop more concrete plans. The timing is critical. The hugely ambitious new University Project, NMiTE, hopes to open its doors in 2019. City of Culture would help secure the cultural infrastructure to attract staff and students to the new institution, with all the economic and educational benefits the university's success would bring. It would also accelerate the growth of Hereford College of Arts. And Hereford needs to attract more young people to study, work and live in the county to remain economically sustainable. I believe we have an exceptional opportunity to do something amazing together. Please don't wait to be asked but sign up for regular news on the website, contribute, ideas and contacts, and spread the message. And if we're not shortlisted? Well hang it, we'll try and make a difference anyway. The central bid team has reconstituted itself as the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership with a longer view to deliver the very best we can for Herefordshire.



## HEREFORDSHIRE CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

### Members of the Strategic Board

Roger Morgan - Chair	Herefordshire
Abigail Appleton - Hereford College of Arts	Geoff Hughes - Herefordshire Council
Ian Archer - The Courtyard	David Marshall - Hereford Cider Museum
Mike Ashton - Chamber of Commerce / Visit Herefordshire	Nic Millington - Rural Media
Tamsin Fitzgerald - 2Faced Dance Company	Christopher Pullin - Hereford Cathedral
Chris Green - The Courtyard	Georgia Smith - Hereford BID
Richard Heatly - A New University for	Michael Tavinor - Hereford Cathedral
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# AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD

## The Old Barracks in Harold Street, Hereford

The Old Barracks in Harold Street, originally known as the Militia Depository, proudly announces its birth-date of 1856 on a keystone over its entrance. Since c.1960 it had also been used as the Herefordshire County Record Office, which is now installed at Rotherwas. The Old Barracks have been well-maintained by Herefordshire Council and could clearly be expected to be adapted for other purposes. However, the building has no statutory protection – it is unlisted- and outside Hereford's Central Conservation Area. The Cathedral School propose to replace it with a three-storey residential block. The building lies in a 19th century residential suburb and naturally, some of the residents have strong ideas about its future and have made an application to Historic England to ascertain if it is worthy of listing.

### The history and purpose of the building

A company of Herefordshire volunteers was raised during the Napoleonic Wars and saw active service on the Continent. After 1815 the threat of social revolution at home persuaded the Tory government of the time to retain a local militia, giving the county magistrates the necessary powers to support it from the rates. Accommodation for its officers and equipment, together with space for training, was provided in the basement of the new Shire Hall built by Sir Robert Smirke in 1812. For the next 40 years the volunteers gathered for training at the Shire Hall but with an increasing burden of local government being placed upon the county magistrates, space in the Hall was at a premium. Moreover, for the magistrates, judges and civil servants who used the Shire Hall the volunteers were a nuisance. When they were not marching around the curtilage of the building, they were up to no good in their basement depot where they were constantly thrusting their bayonets into the lead piping, which fed water into the building, which according to the County Chairman this was 'riddled in 5000 places....to the great detriment of the premises'. The military reforms following the Crimean War (1854-6) amplified the importance of the militia as a reservoir of trained troops and in 1856 the Herefordshire magistrates borrowed £5000 on the rates and sought a site for a new purpose built Militia Depository. The new Chief Constable was able to move into his office in the basement of the Shire Hall and a spacious site, with enough room for a parade ground was found to the east of the Castle Green, in the Bartonsham. In January 1856 the area was defined by a brick wall and the main building was completed in July 1857.

Soon after it was completed volunteers from Herefordshire were being recruited for service in India to restore British power after the Indian Mutiny and for the next century many young men, drawn from the farming communities along the Welsh Border, passed through this building and saw active service in the remotest parts of the world. A large number never returned home and the Old Barracks stands as a monument to the common soldiers, who with joy and sadness, sustained British imperial ambitions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

### The Building

The building was designed as a block-house and built in brick – seven bays by five – under a low pitched slate roof with a central open courtyard. Superficially, it has the appearance of a modest late Georgian country house; its plainness reflecting its utilitarian purpose. The west façade remains as it was built with a central two storey porch, flanked by slightly projecting two bay wings. The porch was provided with military-looking rifle slots – now filled in - the one architectural embellishment that indicates its purpose. A diligent observer might also notice the faint bull's eyes painted regularly on the west wall at about four feet from the ground either side of the porch. These were obviously used for sighting practice when the Herefordshire Rifle Volunteers were founded in 1859. Either side of the porch are evenly spaced sash windows set in segmental headings. The original arrangements on the east front of the building have been masked by alterations made for the Record Office. The north and south facades retain the original arrangements and are regularly sashed like the west front. The interior, albeit modified by the Record Office, seem to have been decidedly domestic and small scale. The building as it



stands is an excellent example of a mid-Victorian militia depot, which must have once existed in every shire in the country but few remain today in a relatively unaltered state. Its domestic character epitomises the civilian context in which young men from the community were recruited to serve their country. Apart from the rifle slots there is little that is militaristic about the Harold Street barracks – England, after all, was not Prussia or France.

### The architect

The militia Depository was designed by the county surveyor for Herefordshire, John Gray (1796-c.1862), who held the office from 1842-61. Gray came to Herefordshire to be clerk of works during the rebuilding of Hampton Court, Hope-under-Dinmore, from 1835-41. His domestic work also included the restoration of Garnons (1849-50) and new houses at Pencombe Hall, Bodenham Hall and Staunton Park (1847). The last named was a late essay in Georgian symmetry, reminiscent of the style of the Hereford Militia Depot. He also designed schools, for example, at Weobley and Pencombe and in the city restored the Coningsby Hospital complex in 1854. As County Surveyor he had 149 county

bridges to maintain and took up his post just at the time when new police stations and lock-ups were required all over the county. For two decades he was very productive and the Old Barracks is a good example of his skill. Both for its historical importance and its architectural quality, the building should be preserved.

David Whitehead

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# PUBLIC REALM CONTRACT

James Copeland, experienced cyclist, master planner and architect is mighty angry about new and proposed cycling infrastructure.

## Holme Lacy Road - An Improvement?

A condition of the planning permission for the Rotherwas Relief Road was that, within one year of the road opening, a scheme for traffic calming on Holme Lacy Road should be implemented. Notwithstanding that the Relief Road opened in 2008, traffic calming proposals were finally implemented earlier this year - only our Council could abuse its position by breaching their own planning permission conditions for 7 years!

The scheme is designed to encourage cars away from Holme Lacy Road as a way of accessing Rotherwas and to shift the emphasis from the car to pedestrians and cyclists. It includes reducing the width of Holme Lacy Road to give the visual cue to drivers that they are not the dominate user, the installation of three 'Toucan Crossings' to encourage cycling and the provision of wider shared surfaces to aid pedestrians and cyclists. Crucially however, there is no legal or physical restriction to vehicular traffic using the road to access Rotherwas. For an indicated £600k spend, what has the scheme delivered and does it work? Having walked, cycled and driven through the scheme, in short, no, it absolutely does not work. It is a classic, outdated, outmoded, engineering driven scheme, that seeks to reinforce the separation between pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, where the motorist still dominates the space, to the detriment of everyone else. It flies in the face of all current accepted design thinking for urban transport. From observation, there

has been no drop at all in vehicular traffic (why would there be), and traffic speeds remain higher than the 30mph limit. Now with three sets of traffic lights, more vulnerable users have to suffer the fumes of standing traffic at peak times and motorists are antagonised by the interruptions. The 'wider shared surfaces' amount to a sea of tarmac and obtuse white lines, the whole being crude and far from ecologically sustainable. They are already being used for car parking, as are sections of the cycle path (albeit they are too narrow to cycle on safely). The cycling provision must have been designed by someone who has never ridden a bike - I rode it several times to try and fathom how it would encourage cycling and found it both confusing and dangerous, and I say that as an experienced cyclist, riding some 2500 miles a year around the County and beyond. For children to ride it unsupervised is simply inviting an accident. Cyclists still have to give way to vehicles at all of the junctions joining Holme Lacy Road, so they have to stop, turn 180 degrees to check



no one is turning left across them and then proceed, simultaneously checking left to see no one is entering Holme Lacy Road. Repeat every 100m. Cyclists are not pedestrians - they can move at 10-20mph - starting and stopping every 100m is disruptive and counter-productive, and there are well established priority designs for crossing junctions which should have been used here. There are some anomalies - users of the bus shelter outside Tesco's now face a walk across the 'shared space' to get to the bus as a result of the road narrowing - creating a point of conflict for cyclists and pedestrians. Approaching westbound, there is a short and very narrow cycle path which then dumps cyclists back into the narrowed road for the first toucan crossing. Having survived that, cyclists have to turn left into Hoarwithy Road and immediately right, across traffic, to continue westwards, crossing two more roads before once again being dumped back into the traffic flow. The indicated extension onwards to the end of Holme Lacy Road has not been built and

much of the signing is either missing or incorrect. Pedestrians fare somewhat better with two new crossings in addition to the existing one, but these adversarial barriers fly in the face of accepted road user hierarchy, where vulnerable road users should come first, not last. Interestingly, the speed limit has remained at 30mph, when the obvious move would have been to reduce it to 20mph. A far better and safer (and more economic) solution for the scheme as a whole would have been a 20mph limit, a raised cushion for the length of the scheme and a series of zebra crossings, as they do in so many towns across mainland Europe. Traffic keeps slowly moving but gives way to pedestrians, and cyclists share the same space as motorists and are safer for it. As it is we have a scheme which achieves very little - it's a visual and practical mess and a waste of limited resources. Really, our Council should be delivering much, much better than this.



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# PLANNING MATTERS

## Former Boys Home Bath Street.

A good consultation exhibition was held by Hereford Housing (HH) who have secured a deal with Herefordshire Council for £2million (before planning consent has been granted, a somewhat odd arrangement as one would expect the value of the site to be a reflection of any secured planning consent).

However HCS is extremely chuffed that Architype and HH have chosen to develop the idea we promoted in this magazine in Winter 2014, lobbied for in Spring 2014 and again in Spring 2016. Whilst there is still little detail the proposal is to retain, at least, two of the old buildings with contemporary flats behind. Currently these are indicated as being just three storeys but with this near city centre location some five storeys might look rather good behind



## St Owen's Street contra-flow cycle path

**It has been a long held desire by those living in St James and Bartonsham and beyond to be able to access the City Centre safely by cycling. The local Community Association started campaigning for an informal contra-flow in 2000, and now 16 years later, with many broken promises and abandoned schemes, about to start on yet another consultation on yet another scheme. The previous scheme by the departed Amey was much criticised at consultation stage for relying on the dangerous 'door zone' option seen in King Street ie cyclists are in danger of being hit by opening car doors. Lack of any political will saw that scheme subsequently abandoned.**

At the end of last year, the Council tabled a whole series of improvements to High Town for consultation and, although the contra-flow was not part of it at that time, it has now been quietly added on and approved by Cabinet in July for public consultation. That has yet to happen, but we have reviewed the design drawing presented to Cabinet. We can summarise our views at this stage as follows;

### Pros

1. the scheme now extends up to the traffic lights at the junction with Bath Street
2. the rat-run slip road into Mill Street is to be closed off to vehicles and made over to cycling

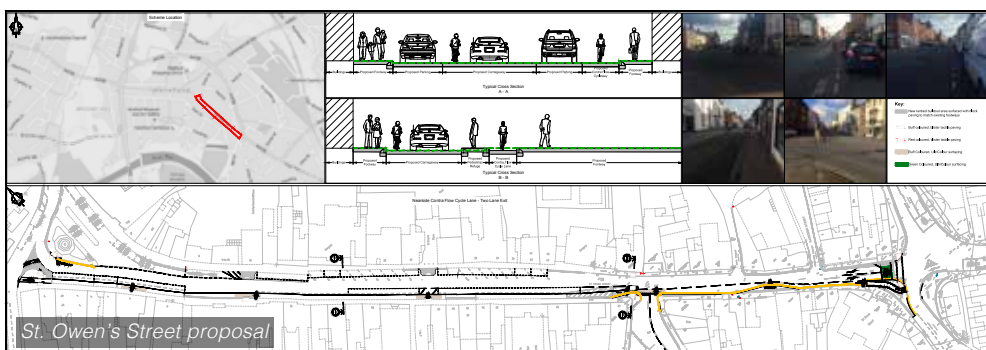
### Cons

3. St Owen's Street is wholly within the Conservation Area. The Council has an adopted Streetscape Design Strategy, 2009, establishing a template for the City, which explicitly states that all one way streets will be permissible for two-way cycling. It also lays out requirements for surface finishes etc.

4. Why then, are we being presented with yet another deeply flawed scheme which disregards adopted policy? Why have Officers let it progress this far and why did Cabinet not reject it out of hand?
5. why are materials shown as concrete block paving, and various colours of macadam, in direct contradiction to the Streetscape Strategy?
6. there has been no early engagement with the Community Association (as per the Localism Act) and as a result there are many cons which local knowledge would have flagged up (we understand that the scheme originates from Balfour Beatty's office in Southampton).

Given the dismal standard of design we have reviewed at the Holme Lacy Road improvements (above), we have grave concerns about this proposal. Policy is there for a reason, not to be disregarded - a cycle path will not work, an informal contra-flow will. Officers and Councillors need to do much better.

*James Copeland*



the old red brick units. (And potential for more income for the Council surely?) This will then enhance the north/east side of Bath Street as it sweeps around past the impressive edifices of Berrows Warehouse and the Magistrates Court. Rest assured our members are working on a refurbishment and enhancement scheme for Franklin Barnes – an icon of the early sixties, both admired and disliked, but part of our bank of history that must be retained so that we don't become just another indistinct town.

## South Wye Active Transport Improvements

A consultation was held in September on these proposals. The proposed "improvements" are all part of the South Wye Transport package, the main feature of which is the Southern Link Road (SLR) which, against much opposition, has now got planning approval but no money from central government; this cash will not be there unless some 'active' transport proposals are approved.

This involves a large number of works to improve cycleways and footpaths all over the South Wye area - Belmont Road, Holme Lacy Road, (see page 6) access to Rotherwas, 20mph zones in Red Hill etc. - any schemes to get people on to their bikes or walking need support but these proposals have their problems. The main project aims to reduce congestion on Belmont Road. New cycleways are proposed from the Clehonger/Abergavenny Road junction to the Belmont roundabout at ASDA; a city bound bus lane from Walnut Tree Avenue to ASDA with a two way cycleway immediately alongside it; closing Walnut Tree Avenue to through traffic and restricting Hunderton Road to buses and bicycles only.

## Guidelines for Planning Application

HCS is concerned about the quality of new planning applications, in particular.

- Targets seem to encourage applications for little sheds and a like, (presumably as these count as an application and are easy to process).
- Names on files submitted by applicants are often entirely unhelpful as to the content. E.G. a long row of numbers.
- Every doc. should have a date. Which came later "Amended" or "Superseded"?
- A good number of applications do not have sufficiently clear drawings on which to make a decision.
- Supporting documents are not complete at time of consultation.

We hesitate to suggest more regulations but the guidelines should be updated to cover these, and other issues, so that democracy and involvement by interested parties, councillors et al is made easier.

## Hereford City Council (HCC)

We are most pleased to report that we now contribute to their three weekly planning committee meetings in a non-voting capacity. HCC work as a parish council and input their views to the County Council; but with members involved locally valuable insight can usefully inform planners of local issues. This is especially relevant with the number of new, temporary, officers not necessarily up to date with precedents.

## 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.

## Herefordshire Economic Plan (HEP)

HCS has been passed the draft of the soon to be released HEP being nearly a hundred pages of close printed verbiage. The plan is not economic so shouldn't this be a "Plan for Herefordshire's Economy"?

"Despite its relatively rural location the county benefits from a direct high speed rail link to London." HCS sticks up for Hereford and the County but this is not true. The direct link stops at many stations and at over three hours is hardly high speed. Recently a friend of mine was stranded at Paddington thinking the last train to Hereford was 19.22 (over three and half hours) as shown in the timetable. There is no indication that it is possible to travel via Newport albeit the connection is unreliable and the staff there generally objectionable. The Council should install a member of staff with GWR until such time as reliable services are installed, accurate information is provided and we get a decent service to London.

*JB*

### SPACE FOR SALE

THE PLACE TO REACH SOPHISTICATED READERS  
WHO CAN SPEND THEIR MONEY ON YOUR SORT OF PRODUCT.

AND YOU HELP US TO INSPIRE COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS  
TO GET IT RIGHT

AND THAT IS NO EASY MATTER!

Thank you

01981 580002



MEETINGS

Saturday 16th July 2016

Summer study trip to Newtown, Powys

A coach full of members spent an absorbing day exploring this little known and possibly unappreciated little town. With David Pugh, Pevsner contributor, to guide us we heard about Robert Owen, his birthplace and how many Americans seek out his history. The refurbished market hall was much admired, being what our Buttermarket should be. Lunch at Gregynog, in the former stable yard and a walk around the gardens, was followed by a tour of one of the three, seventies, housing estates. All are within walking distance of the centre of town where there ought to be a super youth and community centre, instead of the three somewhat shabby small halls on each estate – failing to bring the whole community together – possibly a sad planning mistake. An enlightening day – where next year?

Thursday 15th September 2016.

Museum’s Resource and Learning Centre

Judy Stevenson, curator with the Hereford Museum Service, provided a fascinating tour of the museum store which is substantial and a well organised asset for Herefordshire. It needs to be much better known about, and Judy would like to receive more visitors. Wednesday is drop in day, otherwise tours need to be booked. The future success of these facilities remains questionable, as we struggle to decide what is historically important and how best to rationalise these assets.



Heritage Open Day

In spite of excellent administrative assistance from Herefordshire Council the 2016 Heritage Open Day in September was only a partial success. We prefer to say it as it was; there was certainly a reluctance of many property owners to come forward and show off their homes and offices. Entirely understandable but we hope that next year this annual event will have more interesting and fascinating interiors that we can all enjoy. Open House in London is a grand affair but then many properties there, that are open, are recent conversions and updates promoted by architects. Local architects – remember next year – your chance to show off your creations.



YOUR OPINIONS

Three Elms

As James Copland wrote in the summer the Three Elms proposal is scuppered if it fails to deal with transport issues in the mornings with a lot of cars trying to join the King’s Acre and Roman Road. It is a suburb not a place in its own right. *Richard Burnton*

Southern Relief Road

It is difficult to see how the Active Transport measures will really improve the Belmont Road situation. The SLR and the Western By-Pass (planned for completion in 2027!) will take some traffic off Belmont Road but all the SLR will do is transfer that traffic to Ross Road with increased congestion there. There will also be traffic problems while the work is done. The short bit of bus lane seems hardly worth bothering with – there is apparently enough width to extend this so that it runs from the Tesco roundabout. Why not go still further and if we must have an SLR why not use this to serve a Park and Ride site serving traffic from both the A49 and A465? *John Faulkner*

Blueschool House

My issue is that it’s not enough simply for us as an organisation to verbally wring our hands at such incompetence - we need to be braver and cuter and much more strategic in arguing against this sort of lazy and ignorant decision. Although it’s happening all over the country, not just here, that’s no excuse for such appalling practice. Mo Burns

Last Quarter

Some readers interpreted our comment on the National Pig Association’s criticism of the planning system as support for huge industrial style piggeries. Not at all, we were supporting the view that the planning system is becoming increasingly more complex, and often becoming a disproportional expense on small planning applications. Recently the Federation of Master Builders chief executive Brian Berry said: “The biggest challenge facing SME house builders is the planning process. Councils need to find a way of allocating and granting planning permission for more small sites. The current focus on large sites is squeezing out smaller developers, which is reducing competition in the housing market at a time when we need more, not less, choice.” *JB*

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Blackburn

**John Bothamley was surprised and impressed by this northerly city. “Travel informs and my unexpected business trip there stimulated comparisons with our own City”.** A cathedral city like Hereford, and with a not too dissimilar population size, here I describe some of the similarities in their built environments. Arriving by train into Blackburn one immediately notices a blunt grey mini tower block incongruously sticking above the roof tops. (The council offices). But leave the four platformed station down a wide ramp and before you a wide, paved pathway, without kerbs, obviously leading one into the City. A small and new office block to the left, with empty shop/restaurant units on the ground floor await tenants and adjacent, a sharp cut block houses a new Premier Inn, where I pay London prices because I forgot to book in advance. It is easy to ignore Queen Victoria’s statute as the grand cathedral stands majestically across grass, unencumbered by tall railings, and to its left the new cloisters just completed in July 2016. A most appropriate and respectful addition showing just how well thought out design, in a restrained modern idiom, can enhance an old cathedral. Designed by James Sanderson, the cathedral’s surveyor, it is of a quality as good as our own

Chained Library by Whitfield Partners. A short walk to the glass box of a bus station complete with, what really appears to be, a floating roof providing protection from the elements and access to buses through movement sensed sliding doors. It raises the experience of bus travel to that of a first class lounge at an airport. Unfussed and essentially an empty space with just two chrome kiosks selling papers and drinks. How long will it remain empty of posters and clutter? Please leave it alone it is beautiful. Adjacent is a two layered market hall, on the ground floor being just what our Buttermarket should be and three times the size; on the second a tedious shopping mall but largely occupied. Outside a well sculptured pedestrian-only street with decent chunky planters and trees. Of course there is scruffiness as one moves away from the centre just as in Hereford, but I left inspired by the Youth Zone, looking like a giant gold bar in the setting sun, and a loose kind of unity – it isn’t overly pretty but neither is Hereford. When next heading north try and spend a couple of hours and see what other cities are creating. There appears to be an overall plan, and it houses the first Urban Room in the country!



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?  
☎ 01981 580002  
🌐 chair@herefordcivicsociety.org.uk

Join By Cash

Pay at one of our meetings.

Join By Cheque

Send a cheque and your details including address, phone and email address to  
David Fowler, Stable Cottage, Kingsthorne, Hereford HR2 8AJ

Forthcoming Events

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

**Thursday 17th November 2016**  
Bill Laws – editor of In Our Age  
Living local history brought to life by Hereford’s very own enthusiast.

**Thursday 15th December 2016**  
Karen Usher – Lead on NMiTE  
Update on the exciting plans for our new university.  
(and Christmas drinks and mince pies)

**Thursday 19th January 2017**  
David Whitehead – Historian, author, HCS member  
The Destruction of Victorian Hereford – An Illustrated Talk

**Thursday 16th February 2017**  
Gareth Calan Davies – Geographer and transport expert  
Possible tram project and people movement