



BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

Mid-Winter 2015/16

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## The New Hilton Hotel

In the last newsletter we wrote about the many changes being introduced into the town centre. Here a major project is the construction of the Hilton Hotel on Terrace Mount together with two more accommodation blocks containing apartments and hotel rooms. The project is one of the first to provide the town with the up-to-date facilities which the modern traveller expects. A small party from your Committee led by John Soane were permitted to explore the hotel to see the progress before the opening on 12th December 2015. Carpet fitting in the visitor's accommodation was under way at the time which prevented us from seeing the rooms but we were able to see the swimming pools and the associated changing rooms, exercise equipment, saunas and the capacious meeting rooms with state-of-the-art projection equipment. The reception suite had views of Exeter Road leading to the pier and the beaches as well as those of the Lower Gardens. The last newsletter referred to the Civic Society's suggestion many years ago that a block model of the town centre should be available to the planners and other interested parties so that they could assess the effect that new proposals would have on neighbouring properties.

Looking across the Lower Gardens from the reception suite we looked straight at the steel work being erected for the cinema and entertainment complex being erected in the former bus station and car park which when complete will partially obscure the view of the Lower Gardens. Oh!! For a model of the town.

## Two More Proposed Developments

The first is a proposal for St. Stephen's car park which runs from an entrance on St. Stephen's Road and parallel to St. Stephen's Church and St. Stephen's Way then curves down to meet Braidley Road just beyond the Town Hall. The tree lined space has been assessed as being under used and suitable for residential or employment uses. The Bournemouth Development Company formed in partnership with a specialist management company to ensure that under used Council land could be used for the benefit of the Town. The plan is to erect a block of up to 27 apartments and 8 town houses on the site. The intention is to retain most of the existing trees and vegetation as the site's dominant feature. Some car parking will be kept and provision made for bicycles. The environs of the Grade One listed church of St. Stephen will not be affected. There is a further proposal to build another block of apartments at the opposite end of the site. But this depends partly on whether the building and its foundations pose any threat to the stability of the supports of the Wessex Way.

The other proposal is to build blocks of Student Accommodation on the semi-derelict site on the south-eastern corner of the junction of Holdenhurst Road (formerly the site of the American Golf Company.) The main concern of the Society was the effect on the setting of the East Cliff Congregational (URC) Church on the corner of St. Swithun's Road. The developer said that their building line had been moved back so there was a clear view of the Church Clock Tower when looking from the Lansdowne along Holdenhurst Road towards the station. Both these proposals will be positive additions to the townscape.

## A Fruitless Scam

There are many warnings nowadays of the number of criminal schemes to part us from our money and our savings and the necessity to be aware of bogus telephone calls. The Society's treasurer recently got an email purporting to be from Ken Mantock, our Chairman, requesting him to transfer urgently some £9,000 to meet an unexpected bill. Peter Jackson telephoned one or two of the account signatories to confirm this was an unauthorised request and warned the committee of this and heard no more.

## Business as Usual

The main concerns of the Society are the planning applications that are put forward to the Council for acceptance. Members will know that John Soane looks at most the current requests and submits his opinion to the Committee for agreement before putting it before the Planning Board as part of its assessment of the application.

Sometimes there are preliminary discussions on the proposals until an application is presented to the Board. Some of the current concerns are raised before the formal application is presented. Still at the informal stage are the following:

- **The Winter Gardens site**, the Civic Society's recommendations have been welcomed.
- **The Odeon Cinema in Westover Road** will probably be sold to a residential developer.
- **The Wessex Hotel on the West Cliff** has changed hands but will be modernised and remain a hotel.
- The freehold of the **Belvedere Hotel at the top of Bath Hill** is for sale and there are plans to turn the dilapidated Cliff End hotel into retirement accommodation.

## Sad Losses

Two prominent and long serving members of Bournemouth Council have died in recent months.

**Philip Whitelegg** born in Cheshire 1917 set up as an Estate Agent in Winton in the 1930's. He served in the RASC during the 1941-46 War and became a Councillor for the Redhill Park Ward in 1953 and Mayor in 1966-67. After Local Government Reorganisation he served as a Dorset County Councillor and was made an Honorary Freeman of Bournemouth in 1993. His daughter Anne Rey also became a Councillor and Mayor and unveiled The Civic Society board on the West Cliff.

**Ron Whittaker** was born in Boscombe in 1944 but moved with his parents to Kinson in 1955. He worked as a fireman and driver for the railways but after Beeching moved to the Dorset Ambulance Service. He was elected a Labour Councillor for Kinson in 1971 but after 1976 became an Independent. He was the 'Champion of Throop'.

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