



BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Mid Summer 2013

Town Centre awash with plans and proposals again

Revised plans for a large hotel and residential block on the Terrace Mount site have been approved by the Council. We generally welcomed the proposals which, although a little jazzy in elevational treatment, sit well on the site and offer the scope of economic, tourism and residential regeneration on a plot which has stood empty and vacant for many years. We opposed the demolition of the original hotels and villas on this prominent location in the 1990's (see our 40th Anniversary Booklet) but since there is, sadly, no chance of them ever being re-created see this scheme as the best and most practicable contemporary replacement.

Nearby at the former **Winter Gardens** site we have been concerned with the latest proposals for leisure, commercial, retail and residential development. Former plans did nothing to respect the nature of the site, the closeness of nearby historic listed and attractive residences and hotels nor its wider impact on the character and appearance of the town centre and the garden-like nature of the location and the new plans we considered were even worse. Jean Bird and John Soane put our views to the Planning Board. These and those of other local residents led the Board to defer a decision for a month to allow the developers to modify the plans. When the Board reconvened John Soane repeated the Society's opinion. After further reconsideration the Board rejected the scheme. HURRAH!

Plans for flats and hotel apartments alongside the Trouville Hotel were generally welcomed but inappropriate and unsightly amusements at the end of the Pier were criticised by the Society. Updates on the progress of plans to redevelop the Priory Hill sites comprising the new Tourism Training Hotel next to the BIC and residential blocks farther up on the site of the Bournemouth International Hotel and Chinese restaurant are awaited.

On the other side of the Gardens we welcome the Council's adoption of the Westover Road design proposals and look forward to their implementation together with the removal of street clutter and improvements in signage outlined in the Town Centre Public Realm Strategy. Ken Mantock is working with colleagues at **St Peter's Church** on a £2 million restoration and development strategy for this historic Grade 1 listed building and so opportunities for partnerships with arts, education, community, public and business communities are being explored.

Concurrently the Church of the Sacred Heart on Richmond Hill is being refurbished. While it is closed to allow the interior to be cleaned the congregation has, in an ecumenical spirit, been invited to worship in St Peter's Church.

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The **IMAX** has now been demolished so we await to see the shape and form of the new open air concert facilities planned for this much debated site. Plans to create new accommodation at the Royal Bath Hotel, mainly by internal alterations were supported by the Society.

News is still awaited on the progress of major schemes at the Pavilion (the Nautilus scheme), the former Exeter Road Bus Station site (the LICET scheme) and what the fate will be of the Westover Road cinemas which are closely linked with these and other town centre plans which all promise new multiplex cinemas. **Stop press news** is that the Council want to retrieve the car park and create a bus hub there which would reduce the congestion in Gervis Place. The question must be "at what price", the cost to the ratepayers of the buy-back of the IMAX site was more than enough particularly with the extra cost of re-establishing the site as an "event platform".

Developers of these grandiose schemes seem to believe that the mix they offer, shops, apartments, hotels, cinemas will meet the demands of Bournemouth but none offer what would make a difference to holiday makers - all weather facilities. There was once a swimming pool, an ice rink both available during the day and offering in the summer months entertaining evening shows.

The **Russell-Cotes Museum** was to many of the older generation (and I remember it from 1941 onwards) a collection of articles which were not all associated with Merton Russell-Cotes but did represent some of the past of Bournemouth but the recent view is that this is primarily an Edwardian House so that it is proper to divest it of all those items which are not relevant to the Russell-Cotes family. The refurbishing of the café has meant that the tapestry especially made for it is being sold on. Not all our members are in favour of this change of emphasis. A letter from one of them to the Council leader produced a bromide reply. This emphasises the need for a museum in the town dedicated to the story of Bournemouth.

Seafront Strategy. John Barker has represented the Society on the Council's Working Group looking at ways to enhance the facilities and the appearance of the Borough's glorious seven miles of seafront and to increase the foot fall. Among those represented on the Group are beach hut owners, surfers, swimmers, beach users, caterers, dog walkers, cyclists, the physically handicapped and naturalists. So far three discussion sessions have been held. A firm of design consultants has been employed to collect all the views expressed and to produce possible solutions to some of the proposals. For these sessions the seafront was divided into four sections (originally five). At the western end are the Chines; then the Pier Approach; the beach and promenade to Manor Steps; and then the natural cliff tops and dunes down to Harbour Road. Another meeting has been called for 15th July to harden up some of the outcomes.

Navitus Off-Shore Wind Farm. Debate continues on the proposals to site a large wind farm off shore of the Isle of Wight and visible to varying degrees from all along the Bournemouth seaside areas. There remains great doubt and lack of certainty about the specifics of the proposals, their siting, their impact, their eco credentials and indeed their environmental and economic benefits/dis-benefits. A public debate is being planned by the Southbourne Forum in September or October at which those supporting or opposing the plans will present their views, so keep an eye out in the local media for further details if you wish to go along.

Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre. At last year's AGM Mark Holloway gave an excellent talk on the history of our ancient and important natural heritage at Hengistbury Head and also an insight into the new Visitor Centre being built near the Old Barn. The Centre is now well on its way to completion and opening later in the Summer. Volunteers are being sought to help support the Centre. If you are interested in helping at the Centre, in the shop, as a guide, archiving or physical work in the garden or nearby habitat, contact the Council at richard.hesketh@bournemouth.gov.uk.

Meeting Mike Holmes. Members of the Committee continue to meet quarterly, Mike Holmes the Council's lead on Planning and Transport. Topics discussed at the April meeting included; St Peter's Hall, Seafront Strategy, Cliff End Hotel, Pavilion, IMAX, Public Realm Strategy, Open Space and SANGS near Talbot Woods, and Throop Church and Mill. These meetings, along with other ad-hoc meetings with other senior Council officers and Councillors, keeps us briefed on matters of interest and enables an informal exchange of views thus maintaining good professional communications. If you have any issues you would like us to raise please let us know so we can add it to the agenda of our next meeting.

Annual General Meeting 2013. This took place on 3rd April at the Connaught Hotel, West Cliff and the following were elected to these offices:

President & Newsletter Editor	John Barker
Chairman	Ken Mantock
Deputy Chairman	Jean Bird
Treasurer	Peter Jackson
Built Environment	John Soane
Membership	Sally McGrath
Activities/Luncheons	Beryl Parker
Activities	Keith Barnes
Minutes	Paul Newsome
Website	Andre Thomas
Without Portfolio	Elaine Cooper, Alwyn Ladell and John Walker

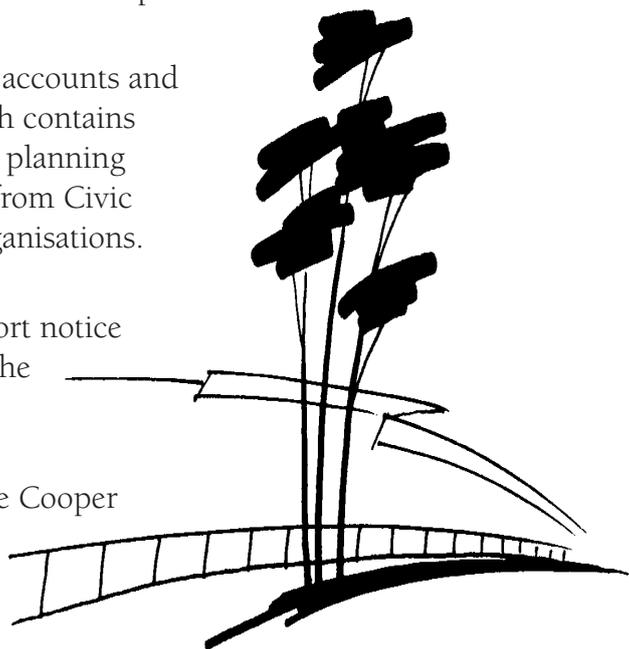
We welcome Alwyn, a fourth generation Bournemouth resident, and Andre to the committee.

The Treasurer noted that the Society is still solvent but subscriptions and contributions from visits only just cover the administration costs. As always the Committee is reluctant to raise subscriptions. One of our life members volunteered at the AGM to revert to being an annual member. Nearly half of our members are life members, a category that ended in 1994, if more opted to follow suit it would help reduce the need in the future for a large increase in the subscription.

Minutes of the AGM together with the annual report and accounts and contact details are available on the Society's website which contains copies of the monthly Committee minutes, comments on planning applications, presentations, newsletters and information from Civic Voice. The Heritage Alliance and other environmental organisations.

After the official business John Barker stood in at very short notice (several hours) and gave an excellent, illustrated talk on the Ensbury Park Race Course and Airfield.

We were pleased to congratulate members Rod and Elaine Cooper on their inauguration as Mayor and Mayoress for the coming year and noted that the Society has had two members in succession as Bournemouth's First Citizen: Phil Stanley-Watts and Rod Cooper. Well done.



On a much sadder note we reported the death in Spring of a dear friend of the Society, long-standing member Dr James Fisher. Jim had supported the Society for over thirty years and his wise counsel, jolly e-mails and great knowledge of things to do with Throop, Holdenhurst and Muscliffe will be missed. He and his widow Rosemary were for many years great hosts to fund raising garden parties at their beautiful thatched river side home and only last year we celebrated Civic Day with a garden party there. John and Eileen Barker, Ken Mantock and Beryl Parker represented the Society at Jim's funeral and life celebration and as a real sign of the many lives he touched and brought a sparkle to, the church was full to bursting. Our thoughts go to Rosemary and Jim's large family.

The Society lost another loyal supporter when retired architect Bob Boot died earlier this year. He was always at the forefront of many visits and meetings. Our sympathy goes to his wife.

However, sometimes we only know that a member has died or moved away is when subscriptions are not renewed or someone notices that they no longer join our visits. We always would like to know what has happened to them so please inform Sally McGrath or another committee member.

Planning Applications.

Commenting on planning applications is one of the "bread and butter" tasks and responsibilities of the Society. As set out in the 40th Anniversary History booklet, looking at planning proposals and letting the Council know what we think about them has been the core of our work as a local amenity society. Major schemes will always hit the headlines - in our newsletter and sometimes in the media - The Echo and even on TV.

But it is not just the big schemes that are reviewed - many small schemes are as important and can have an impact for better or worse in the areas they may sit. The following are a few of the plans commented on in recent months: the SEB Ground at Broadway Lane - 30 houses, Durley Chine - beach kiosk, Holloway Road - 50 houses, and all the following for flats, 18 Cromwell Road, 29 Edghill Road, 8 Pinecliffe Avenue, 18 to 20 Studland Road, 17,19,21 Church Road, 5 & 7 Calvin Road, 113 West Hill Road, 139- 145 Southbourne Overcliffe Drive.

The future of Throop Mill and the Church and its manse at Throop is still not clear but it highlights the need to be vigilant when churches and other halls are proposed for closure and demolition. One that has slipped under our radar is the East Howe URC building which is to become part of the Co-op empire. We need to be sure that these buildings which have served part of the community in the past cannot be used in a wider but similar role before irrevocable decisions are taken.

40th Anniversary Booklet

There have been several mentions in this newsletter of the 40th Anniversary booklet that was written last year by John Barker, Ken Mantock and John Soane. Copies are available at just £5 each and give a chronological survey of the issues, campaigns, events, highs and lows of the Society's activities since it was founded out of the Save Bournemouth Campaign in October 1972. Do buy a copy - it's a good read and well worth the fiver it will cost you. Contact Beryl Parker to get your copy or see the separate flier that comes with this newsletter.

Contacts

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The views of contributors are not necessarily those of the Society.