



The Lymington Voice

The Newsletter of the Lymington Society Autumn 2006

Heated Debate at Public Meeting on Planning

Lymington residents made their feelings clear to planners on Wednesday June 21st at the community centre.

The Society called the meeting to give our members, and other Lymington residents, a chance to express their views about the recent spate of development in and around our town.

More than 250 people heard about the political and bu-

reaucratic background to the planning process, and many expressed their particular concerns about the process itself, and recent decisions that have been made.

Councillors and planning officials took the opportunity to answer criticisms, and to express their own personal opinions

See the Chairman's Note, this page, for further details

"We think there is a lack of adequate consultation. There is no requirement on developers to consult with local groups before drawing up plans. We get three minutes to share with any other objectors at Planning Committee Meetings and we cannot get a hearing because they have already been booked"

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a great success	
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Society Launches Campaign to Save the Cannon Street School

The Lymington Society has launched a campaign to stop the demolition of a much loved building in the heart of the Lymington Conservation area which is currently under threat.

The attractive Victorian building on the corner of Canon Street and North Close, which at one stage seemed likely to become the Register Office for Lymington, is threatened with



demolition in order to build a block of 16 flats for Swaythling Housing Association.

Members are invited to join the campaign by visiting the Society website www.lymsoc.co.uk where they can sign an online petition and keep up to date with the campaign.

Despite a slight reduction from the
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Chairman's Note

The last Lymington Society newsletter was produced in the Spring. Since then as ever with the Society much has happened.

Waterford Lane

At the end of May two issues came together. The first was the disquiet amongst the residents of Waterford Lane and the rest of the town about the way in which planning permission had been granted for a large new development by Quantum Homes, which was notorious firstly because



Society Chairman
Clive Sutton

the fact of the ring barking of

trees by the developers, and secondly for complaints against the then Town Mayor which have subsequently been dealt with by a Local Government Standards Investigation in which he has been exonerated.

Avenue Road Flats

The second was the planning application for a huge block of 29 flats at the junction of Avenue Road and Southampton Road.

At that stage there was so

much feeling in the Town that, following on the success of a previous public meeting over the Webb Site, the Society's committee decided to call another public meeting.

Lymington Society on TV

Just prior to the meeting Don Mackenzie had been interviewed for local television and radio which produced considerable interest.

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Social Programme Events

Summer Garden Party

The garden party at East Grove was a great success, with 65 Lymington Society members enjoying a warm and sunny evening.

Sir Robin and Lady Georgina Craufurd hosted the event, and Georgina gave a fascinating talk about the history of the garden, which was originally laid out in 1760. It is unusual in having landscape gardening techniques applied to a relatively small garden, an example of micro-landscaping.

Later overlays added a shrubaceous border in 1820, and a late Victorian

formal layout, with the present design overlaid in 1935.

Armed with this knowledge we set off, pleasantly full of Pimms, wine, and the excellent food that Yvonne Mackenzie and her daughter Caroline and niece Emma had provided, to explore the garden itself.

The event will be repeated next summer, and we can only hope that the weather will be as perfect.

Looking at Hurst—with Derek Judge

Derek was custodian of Hurst Castle in the 1980s and 90s, and has since been

Visit www.lymsoc.co.uk

entertaining and informing local groups with a slide show and talk.

Although only 25 people managed to attend, we all very much enjoyed the talk. Derek's slides were comprehensive, ranging from the original plans to defend the South Coast to the use of the castle in WW2, and as a popular observation platform for the start of international ocean races. He peppered his talk with interesting and amusing anecdotes, which brought the castle to life, and showed that his extensive knowledge of the castle is combined with a deep affection.

Upcoming Events for your Diary

St Barbe Exhibition—Nov 16th
Evelyn Dunbar—War and Country



A Land Girl and the Bail Bull, oil on canvas, 1945 C Tate, London 2006.

Private View and Talk by the Curator on this fantastic Exhibition at the St Barbe Museum.

The previous Society evenings at the St Barbe Museum, Paintings of Nelson and Painting with Scissors, were both a great success, thanks largely to the talks by Steve Marshall, the curator. Don't miss this chance to see Evelyn Dunbar's work, with an introduction from Steve.

Christmas Drinks—Dec 13th

The Stanwell House Hotel is once again the venue for the Society's Christmas Drinks.

We have much to discuss and, we think, celebrate this year. Come and meet the committee, and your fellow members, for a relaxing and enjoyable get-together.

New members are particularly welcome, and please bring friends who are considering joining.

C13 Monasticism—Monking around at Beaulieu—March 14th 2007

Michael Lees talks about Beaulieu Abbey from its founding in 1204, its influence on the area, and life as



a monk. He promises to add to the atmosphere by giving the talk in costume!

History of the House and Grounds of Hordle-Walhampton School May 4th 2007

David Hill will give a talk about the house and grounds, their history and significance to Lymington. We will then walk around the grounds in their Spring splendour

Summer Garden Party—June 7th 2007

Sir Robin and Lady Georgina Craufurd have once again invited the Society to use their garden, at East Grove, Grove Rd, as the venue for our Summer Garden Party. As well as food and drinks, and an opportunity to enjoy the lovely garden, we plan for Croquet this time.

Society Website - Are you online?

If so, Take a look at www.lymsoc.co.uk

- Download the latest Newsletter
- See a full transcript of the Public Planning Meeting
- See the latest status for planning applications that we are involved in
- See the latest Social Meetings' Diary of Events
- Download Membership forms for your friends

Let us know your email address so we can keep you in touch. Send your email address to:

Donald Mackenzie Tel 01590 678087
Nigel Seth-Smith Tel 01590 678210

donald@donald-mackenzie.co.uk or
nigel@gennum.co.uk

**For Details on how to obtain
Tickets for these Events**

Contact:

The Social Secretary

Nigel Seth-Smith

on 01590 678210

nigel@gennum.co.uk or

**21 Waterford Lane, Lymington.
SO41 3PT**

**Or Purchase direct from Solent
House Dental Surgery, Cannon
Street, Lymington**

Planning Report



Nic King Planning Sec.

We've continued the fight against poor planning decisions, focusing our efforts on over-development or replacement of houses with flats, which threaten the character of our town.

Waterford Lane



We failed to stop the revised application for 11 houses at 18 & 20 Waterford Lane, which NFDC granted in spite of a strenuous campaign led by local residents, whose views deserved a fairer hearing. This decision among others crystallized the strong feelings of many local people about the tide of development that's taking place in our town and the extent to which the planning system listens to them and takes account of their views (see the chairman's report on page 1).

However, we can point to some recent decisions that we've helped achieve, in conjunction with our town councillors and local residents, including the application for 10 houses at Waterford Close, which produced 20 objections and which NFDC rejected.

Southampton Road



46, 46A, 48 Southampton Road & 1 Avenue Road; NFDC has now refused two applications for this site, one for a single block of 29 flats and another for 53 assisted living flats - on grounds of: size, scale, mass, layout and form unsympathetic to the wider context; noise disturbance from proposed car parking areas; proximity to busy junction of Avenue Road and Southampton Road, vehicular access would cause undue interference with the safety and convenience of adjoining public highway.

Bath Lodge, Kings Saltern Road



Terrace of ten dwellings; we have objected to the developer's appeal against NFDC's decision to refuse this application on grounds of the high risk of flooding; inadequate visibility at road junction; too much off street parking encouraging private car use!; no open space; unduly dominant; too close to cedar tree; overbearing impact on Kings Saltern Road

Waterford Close



10 houses - outline; 20 objections received; NFDC refused on grounds of safety and convenience of users of the public highway; incongruity with their setting, detracting from the spacious character and appearance of the area; loss of two oak trees which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order

Buckland Mead

2 terraces of 3 houses at 2 Alexandra Road; NFDC refused this due to its unacceptable impact on neighbours in terms of overlooking and associated loss of privacy

Webbs site, Bridge Road

We've objected to an appeal by Paxton, the developer, against NFDC's refusal of permission for them to replace the hotel they originally proposed for this landmark site with a care home. Paxton says the change would make little difference in terms of build form and land use and that a care home could generate more employment opportunities. However the SPG (Special Planning Guidance) for this unique site does not permit the C2 usage a care home requires.

What we've been working for all along is a less dense and more imaginative scheme that links the new development into the life of the town, not an isolated second-home dormitory. A hotel would bring life to site while a care home could all too easily become yet more second homes or retirement flats.

SPISE

We attended a one day seminar on 'The Planning Game' on 23.09.2006 at Odiham, organised by SPISE (Sane Planning in the South East) on what we can do to influence the planning process in favour of good design and development. SPISE has produced a helpful list of sources of information on planning, which you can see on the LymSoc web site www.lymsoc.co.uk

Edward Dawson, regional director of CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) introduced the principal changes in the new PPS regime, in which planning policy 'statements' replace 'guidance'.

The principles underlying the new regime are the promotion of sustainable development e.g. regeneration of brown field sites and mixed use communities in order to reduce the need for travel. It gives boroughs the authority to disallow 'twin track' applications where a developer aims to secure concessions by pursuing alternative proposals in parallel; but it does NOT close off the

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Chairman's Note (continued)

Public Meeting

This took place on the 21st of June in the community centre attended by more than 250 people having to take up a total of three rooms with two rooms linked by loudspeakers and microphones.

Those of you who were there will no doubt remember the meeting well, but many of you may not have been able to come. For those of you who have not heard my opening speech a copy is available on the website. Due to some audio problems in one of the rooms I had to restart it halfway through but I made the point to the councillors present that it was probably a good thing for them to hear it twice.

Councillors

The meeting was well attended by District Councillors including Mel Kendall, Jeremy Heron, Tom Russell, Maureen Holding and Paul Hickman together with the Chief of Development Control Chris Elliott. Also present was a County Councillor Adrian Evans and Town Councillors Elizabeth Lewis and John Smale. Unfortunately the meeting clashed with the Town Council Planning Meeting that evening.

Residents Speak

After an illustrated presentation by Don Mackenzie the meeting was opened up to contributions from the floor firstly on the planning application process for Waterford Lane and secondly more general comments relating to overdevelopment. There were wide-ranging questions and answers and no subject was out of bounds.

Reply by Mel Kendall and Chris Elliott

Mel Kendall replied on behalf of the councillors supported by Chris Elliott. Their contributions were well received and Chris Elliott made the point that he had not realised that when developers approach the Hampshire county council regarding highway access prior to drawing up development plans, that Hampshire county council did not pass this information on to NFDC who could take steps to protect trees in advance of potential ring barking by developers. He would take steps to rectify this. Derf

Patton as a well-known local nurseryman made the comment that ring barked trees could be saved.

For those of you who want to look at the detail of the meeting it was recorded and a full transcript is available to be taken off the website www.lymsoc.co.uk

Petition

A petition was circulated at the meeting and afterwards and has now achieved 1425 signatures. It has been presented to the NFDC and Mel Kendall, the leader of the Council, is very keen that there should be a specific meeting to deal with this petition and concerns of other amenity societies and councils in the area. A meeting is taking place at the NFDC offices on the 30th of October, when the petition will be presented to the Council. I am told that the wish will be for the Council to be able to pass this petition on up to the Secretary of State to show the strength of local views on the impact of national planning policies.

Our initiative seems to have been followed up by our local communities also protesting at the amount of development in their areas and producing petitions.

of burgage plots and burgage plot walls, to the Southampton Evening Echo.

Our dialogue with the council over various planning issues is ongoing. The only subject which is almost dormant at the moment is the Webb site redevelopment where the site is going through a change of ownership and at the same time an appeal to change current hotel permission to a care home use which the majority of your committee disagrees with.

More and more people are realising that Lymington is under a real threat of significant change and that everything must be done to minimise the effect of change on the town's character. Whilst obviously new homes are needed there are plenty of sites for these new homes on the Webb Site, the old Hospital Site when it becomes available and other places where dense development is not out of keeping with the locality. The problem is that developers are taking advantage of government directives encouraging density of development, to redevelop existing residential areas which do not immediately need redevelopment.

Support your local Councillor

Apparently the Councillors do not agree with the changes of character but say they need support from the local community to resist such applications. The Society's membership has increased considerably recently because of new members wishing to be involved in that resistance. Please encourage others to join and pass their names to the Secretary for application forms.

Finally your Chairman gained some satisfaction on your behalf when the Quantum Homes developers asked to be introduced at a recent party in the Town. After my initial surprise I was able to react quickly enough to ask: "And which of you ring barked the trees". After their initial surprise one of them was prepared to confess and say that everyone is entitled to one mistake. On your behalf I hope there will not be any more such "mistakes"!

STOP PRESS: *The petition meeting has resulted in a council motion instructing Council officers to reject any application which does not meet these new standards of being in context and sympathy with the local area - ed.*

Social Events

Social events have continued during the summer and I am very grateful to the Social Committee for the success of these. An ongoing programme is shown elsewhere in this newsletter.

Planning

By the time you read this letter we will have made representations and a planning appeal on the Bath Lodge development in Bath Road, which if it is allowed will have a very detrimental effect on the character of the Bath Road at that point. We are also been involved in the concern over the demolition of a burgage plot wall at 28/29 High St without planning permission and I have given some comments on the importance

Meeting to Discuss "Town Health Check" Initiative

The Lymington Society has long been supportive of closer co-operation with local bodies and members will remember from previous newsletters our proposal to establish a Lymington Forum at which a consensus could be produced on important issues facing the town.

We were therefore very pleased when the new Town Clerk Mr Andy Rimmer persuaded the Lymington and Pennington Town Council to sign up to "The Market Town Health Check". The Market Town Health Check Initiative was originally started by the Countryside Agency as part of a process of renewal for market towns across the country. The main aim is to enable towns such as Lymington to involve all sections of their local community in critically examining the current position of the town both economically, environmentally and as a place to live. From this review, the community can together develop a "Town Plan" to hopefully plan a vibrant and successful future for their town.

Representatives of many organisations in the town were invited to attend the initial meeting and four Members of the Lymington Society Committee attended the initial meeting called by Andy Rimmer which took place at the Lymington Community Centre on the October 27th.

Following an introduction by Mr

Rimmer, who set out an array of interesting facts and figures about the town, the speakers for the evening were introduced. These included Council Officers from the NFDC and HCC who set out the background to the Market Town Health Check process and who described other towns and villages including New Milton and Milford on Sea who already started their own town or village plan.



The main speaker for the evening was Chris McCallum who is currently Chairman of the Alton Town Plan Committee who have recently completed this Health Check process for Alton. This has resulted in the production of "Alton 2020", a plan for the future development of Alton. Mr McCallum spoke passionately about the benefits of the process for the town of Alton which included a new sense of purpose and shared community values which had arisen from many different organisations coming together to work for the benefit of community as a whole. A copy of the Alton Town Plan which gives a good idea of what Lymington could achieve plan can be seen at

www.altontown.co.uk/Alton2020/

On a more tangible level he pointed to the grant of £100,000 from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and East Hampshire District Council to Alton Initiatives Management (AIM) Ltd a company set up by the Alton Town Plan Partnership to boost the local economy.

Following these presentations a discussion took place before a vote was taken on whether Lymington and Pennington should embrace the Health Check process. The Lymington Society Committee members spoke in favour of bringing this initiative to Lymington and Pennington and were pleased that those present agreed to set up a Steering Committee to take the proposal forward.

This is a major undertaking which will require many volunteers prepared to invest time in planning the future of their town. Members of the Society who wish to volunteer to take part in the initiative should contact the Secretary of the Society Dr Ivor Johnson who will put them in touch with the Steering Committee.

We look forward to working with the Town Council and other bodies to make a success of this venture and will be reporting on progress in future editions of the Newsletter.

Planning Report (contd. from page 3)

ignominious 'outline planning permission' route that developers often exploit.

The general view is that the new regime is designed to give our planners and decision makers even less room for deviating from national policies than before.

However, the new regime does make GOOD design an issue for the first time. New planning documents like 'Housing Design, Density and Character' spell out the criteria that decision makers should apply to individual applications, including whether a particular development 'improves the character and sense of identity of a place'.

We'll have to work hard to encourage our local councillors and members of the development control committee to use what scope the new guidance does give them. We want them to influence decisions on local development positively, taking account of local peoples' views about their town's development. We need them to use their own judgement and discretion rather than unquestioningly following the rules and their officers' advice.

We also have to find a way to match the professionalism of the developers through our knowledge of planning policies. If there's one message the day reinforced, it's that we have to take the initiative and try to influence policy at

an ever earlier stage for example by participating in the local planning process - now known as the Local Development Framework. By the time a planning application is underway, the odds are already in favour of the developers.

We're desperately in need of expert advice on planning policy - if you think you have the expertise and can give a few hours from time to time, we'd love to hear from you.

Nic King Planning Secretary

Email: nicolas.king@dia1.pipex.com

Save our School Press Release (continued from page 1)

previous application for 20 flats, the new application represents a density of 106 dwellings per hectare which is one of the greatest building densities of any recent application in the town and is far in excess of the 35 to 40 units per hectare set out as a minimum in the now infamous PPG3 planning guidance from Mr John Prescott

The Lymington Society is extremely supportive of the provision of affordable houses, but is not prepared to support the demolition of a historic and attractive old building which could be renovated and reused.

Away from the historic High Street, we are losing many of our older and attractive Victorian and Edwardian buildings such as Hillcroft in New Street and many others. Although the school building is not a listed building, it is one of the last old buildings in this part of the town and the Society is strongly of the

“Conservation area consent will not be given for the demolition of unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.”

opinion that it should be retained.

Although currently looking rather neglected, surrounded by ugly tarmac and railings, this attractive building, where many Lymington residents were educated over the years, could be renovated and form part of a small, sympathetically laid out, courtyard development. This could provide almost as many social flats - but in way that fits in so much better with the Conservation Area.

Such a sympathetic redevelopment is currently taking place in the Angel Yard behind the Angel hotel where new buildings blend attractively with the old Hotel courtyard buildings.

Conservation Areas were created to afford a higher level of protection to historic and attractive towns and villages. Buildings in a Conservation area are not supposed to be demolished if they are making a valuable contribution to the Conservation Area

In fact the Local Plan states:

“Conservation area consent will not be given for the demolition of unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area”

In the case of the Cannon Street School building, the proposed replacement buildings completely fail to pass the test required of architectural excellence to enable the demolition of the current building on the site, putting the proposal in direct contravention of section DW E24 of the New Forest Local Plan

The proposed new buildings take their size and mass from the extremely large and ugly building next door in Cannon Street which was developed as a squash court in the late 70s.

It is totally unacceptable that this large and dominating building should be used as an excuse to build blocks of flats which completely overshadow the surrounding one and two storey buildings in North Close and Canon Street nearby.

Despite this application involving the demolition of the historic building in a Conservation Area and its replacement by a modern block of flats, The Lymington Society has not been asked to comment at any stage on this proposed demolition and new building.

As is well know, planning applications of this nature do not get to this advanced stage without intensive negotiations between the council officers and the developers.

We find it completely unacceptable that behind the scenes, un-elected planning officers will have encouraged the developers to believe that it is reasonable to consider demolishing a building of this importance to so many people, in a Conservation Area and its replacement by totally unsuitable blocks of flats at a density of over a hundred dwellings per hectare.

It is high time that contentious application such as this were drawn up with much more involvement from the local community and not presented as a fait-accomplis with only a short time to object.

Following the public meeting held by the Society in June this year and the “Stop

the Destruction of Lymington” Petition signed by over 1700 local people protesting against overdevelopment, the NFDC and the Council Leader Mel Kendall have promised to move decisively to protect the character of the New Forest towns by urging officers to reject unsuitable developments. A motion was passed by the NFDC at a recent meeting instructing officers to refuse such developments

We very much hope that the Development Control Committee of the NFDC will now be seen to back this new stance by rejecting this totally unsuitable development and recommending the retention and renovation of this historic building.

The Society will be taking every opportunity to object to this application which represents another chapter in the destruction of the character of our town and we urge local residents to log onto our website www.lymsoc.co.uk where they can download a sample letter of objection to send to the NFDC Development Control Department to object to this application.

Membership Details

New Members are always welcome to join the Lymington Society and existing Members are urged to encourage friends to join.

As well as receiving the Newsletter, Members will be welcome to attend regular social events arranged by the Social Committee.

Membership costs £5.00 per member. Application forms (available to print from our Web Site www.lymsoc.co.uk) or from Derek Sheffer at the address below.

Please send Completed Membership to:

Derek Sheffer

**Lymington Soc. Membership Sec.
Lorne Cottage,**

Navarino Court,

Lymington, SO41 9AE

