

## From the Editor

You will see elsewhere in this edition that the Assize Court project is making progress which is good news.

You will also see from the notes of the 2019 AGM, that I am currently covering the role of Honorary Secretary as well as being Editor of Trust News. It's not a difficult or particularly time consuming job but it is really a role which needs to be taken on by someone else.

Full training will be given so if this is something that you would be prepared to take on, please get in touch. I would be delighted to hear from you!

*Philippa Morgan*

## The Trust for Devizes AGM 2019

The Annual General Meeting of The Trust for Devizes was held in the Wessex Room, Devizes Corn Exchange at 7.30p.m. on Thursday, 21st March 2019.

Chairman: James Flood

### 1. Present:

Twenty five members were present.

### 2. Apologies:

Apologies had been received from D&S Buxton, M Boden, D Dawson, S&A Padwick, D&P Vernon, S Flood, A Ellison, M Dainty, J Hawthorne.

### 3. Chairman's Opening Remarks:

The Chairman welcomed all those present and thanked them for their support.

### 4. Minutes:

Minutes of the AGM held on 20th April 2018 had been laid on each table.

## Spotlight on Street Lighting

*Dec McSweeney reports on developments*



*Too bright? A late night scene in Long Street, Devizes*

The ongoing replacement of inefficient streetlamps with LEDs is a move to be welcomed for sound ecological reasons, and on the whole the Trust has no issues with it. But one of our members has identified a problem with the way the lights are being replaced.

In Long Street, some of the lamp posts have been replaced with much taller models, and the LEDs are unnecessarily bright - so bright that, in our member's words, you could repair a watch at midnight. The new brighter lights are tall enough to cast light into upstairs rooms in the houses along the street.

The issue has been raised with the Council, and we hope that the necessary adjustments can be made. However the replacement programme may be part of a larger scheme to comply with the requirements of the nation's mobile network operators, who need places

to site transmitters for the next generation of wireless connectivity - so-called 5G.

Lamp posts are ideal for this purpose as the network needs many more transmitters than previous generations. However, the transmitters needed to be sited quite high up, which might explain the new posts in Long Street.

We have not yet been able to discuss this issue with Wiltshire Council. The Trust's *raison d'être* is to preserve the special character of Devizes. We will seek to ensure that any changes to the street scene, especially in our conservation areas, are handled sensitively, in consultation with those who are affected.

*We welcome your comments on this topic, and any information you can provide. Have your streetlamps been replaced recently? Our contact details are on the back page.*

# Trust AGM

*continued*

## Planning Matters - Quakers Walk Phase 2

*A familiar tale where developers get their way*

Acceptance was proposed by Declan McSweeney. Seconder: Judy Rose  
Agreed unanimously and signed.

### 5. Annual Report:

Copies of the Annual Report had been laid on each table.

The Chairman said that Tony Duck and Tony Sedgwick who had died in 2018 were missed greatly by the Committee for their wisdom and knowledge of Devizes. Philippa Morgan had stood in temporarily as Hon. Secretary but a permanent post holder was needed. Members were asked to consider putting themselves forward for the role.

The Chairman noted the progress on the Assize Court project which the Trust supported wholeheartedly. There was now a clear path for progress to be made on the redevelopment and reuse of the building.

Richard Ormerod proposed that the report be accepted. Declan McSweeney seconded. Passed unanimously.

### 6. Financial Report:

Copies of the Annual Financial Report had been laid on each table.

In introducing the report, James Flood (in his role as Honorary Treasurer) reported that the finances of the Trust were in a good state

James Flood moved that the report be adopted. Seconder: John Girvan. Passed unanimously.

### 7. Election of Officers:

All current Committee members were willing to stand and were proposed by Judy Rose and seconded by Declan McSweeney.

This concluded the formal business of the AGM.

The Chairman introduced the speaker Terry Bracher, Heritage Services Manager for Wiltshire Council.

Terry has worked at the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre since 2007, originally as Archives and Local Studies Manager. He gave a very interesting talk about the History Centre and offered to arrange a group tour for Trust members.



*The new development lies to the east of Quakers Walk, just north of the canalside allotments*

Members will recall the long drawn out process of the planning application for housing development of the field east of Quakers Walk and to the north of the canal side allotments. Outline planning permission was given in October 2016 by Wiltshire Council for the development in an act which the Trust considered to be illegal. Two and a half years later, the developers, Bellway Homes, received approval for the development to go ahead.

The Trust objected to the detailed proposals submitted by Bellway Homes for a number of reasons but our main concern was about the utilitarian treatment of the buffer between the new estate and Quakers Walk. Bellway were proposing a uniform 35m the whole length of the site. We felt that this uniformity would contrast strongly with the more visually appealing buffer between the earlier development and Quakers Walk.

To make this worse, the plan showed that all housing fronting the buffer would have vehicular access from the buffer side, so the visual impact of vehicles and roads would be significant. We also felt that this might have an impact on the use of Quakers Walk as a commuting corridor for bats.

Bellway subsequently submitted a number of changes to the plans for

the development but no changes were made to the buffer or the arrangements for car parking. We also became aware that a number of residents in the original development were very concerned about the impact on their properties because of the proximity of the houses on the new development.

The planning application was called in for discussion at the Eastern Planning Committee meeting on 25th April, and Philippa Morgan spoke on behalf of the Trust about our concerns. One of the residents from the original development also spoke, as did a representative of the Devizes Sports Club.

Not surprisingly, the application was approved with only Councillor Peter Evans voting against. Other councillors took the view that officers had worked with the developers and that concerns expressed during the consultation process had been dealt with.

The Trust most certainly doesn't agree that its concerns have been addressed. Nor does the resident who will be badly affected by the proximity of the new houses. And the Sports Club representative was off to see their lawyer about concerns that the new residents will complain about the spotlights and noise of the rugby teams.

All we can say is that we tried.



# The earliest Trust News

Philippa Morgan trawls the archives

## Museum News

A selection of forthcoming events

**Walk: An evening walk from Avebury to Beckhampton**  
2nd July 2019 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Led by Isobel Geddes this 2-3 mile evening walk around Avebury and Avebury Trusloe will go as far as the Long Stones at the end of the Beckhampton Avenue.

£10 (£8 WANHS members).  
*Booking essential - limited to 15.*

**The Hall at Bradford on Avon and the Moulton Story**

10th July 2019 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

See the gardens and the ground floor of The Hall accompanied by a short talk on the importance of Spencer Moulton to Bradford on Avon and the legacy of Alex Moulton – an innovative engineer and designer

£12 (£10 WANHS members).  
*Booking essential - maximum 20*

**Stonehenge Landscape Walk**  
Lecture Hall, Wiltshire Museum

30th July 2019 10:30 am - 6:00 pm

A guided tour of the amazing collections of the Wiltshire Museum, followed by a guided walk from Durrington Walls to Stonehenge. Further details will be emailed on booking.

£40 (£35 WANHS members).  
*Booking essential. No dogs*

**West Kennet Palisade Enclosure**  
4th August 2019 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

This summer, Josh Pollard and his team are returning to the Avebury landscape to investigate the West Kennet Palisade enclosures. They will be excavating some newly identified features and looking at the relationship between a number of the monuments.

*WANHS Members only. Cost: £10 - maximum 25*

Bookings and enquiries:  
[www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk](http://www.wiltshiremuseum.org.uk)

Or call 01380 727369

You can now search the  
Museum's Collections  
database online

[www.wiltshireheritagecollections.org.uk](http://www.wiltshireheritagecollections.org.uk)

### THE TRUST FOR DEVIZES

"To protect and maintain the character and amenities of the Devizes Area"

#### NEWSLETTER No.1.

Since the inaugural Meeting the Committee have made every effort to increase the membership as it was felt of primary importance to the Trust that a large membership should be obtained so that the Trust could at least speak with authority. To this end Committee members addressed and hand delivered letters to all those who signed the Petition inviting them to become members of the Trust. Whilst the response has not been as overwhelming as was naturally hoped for, new members are continually being enrolled and up to the time of this news letter the number of members is 240.

The Committee has met on four occasions and discussed the following items:

**COPPER BEACH PANS LANE.** The Chairman has actively pressed for the retention of this tree and has been in contact with the Area Planning Officer who has promised further enquiries to see if the tree can be saved.

**PROPOSED ALTERATION TO SIBBOTHAM STREET JUNCTION ETC.** The Committee sent a letter to Devizes Town Council asking that arrangements should be made for any plan which affects Devizes Green etc to be first made available to the Public for their views. The letter was read at the Council meeting and the Town Clerk replied stating that before any action was taken the plans would be placed on view in the autumn. The Committee still feel that it would have been more prudent to invite the Public's views before making a recommendation on plans which the Public have not seen.

**PAVING.** The Chairman on behalf of the Committee attended meetings regarding the proposed development for Army housing on the rear of this area. It was felt that development was bound to come here in the future but that such development should be of low density and in keeping with the existing development. In any case it was felt that the Army authorities might well make use of land in the London Road area in the first instance, as they own acres of badly neglected land either side of the most used entrance to the Town. The matter is still being followed up.

**POTTERNS CUTTING.** This matter has been under review and it is understood that an amended plan is now before the County Council and although this does not preserve the entrance to Potterns as it now is, it does go a long way to preserve amenities and the Committee take the view that existing dangers must be taken into account whilst endeavouring to preserve amenities.

**SOLVING STONES.** The Committee was not invited for its views but felt no useful observation could have been made.

**FUTURE ACTIVITIES.** The possibility of obtaining a photographic record of the Area has been investigated by a small sub committee and although major projects cannot be undertaken at the present time the sub committee felt that interest amongst members could be stimulated for a 'who's who' or 'where's who' for Devizes, selecting pictures taken from unusual positions, or showing close ups of small individual items which might be difficult to identify and locate.

-1-

### THE TRUST FOR DEVIZES

"To protect and maintain the character and amenities of the Devizes Area"

#### NEWSLETTER No.2.

April 1968.

At the time of the sending out of this Newsletter the number of members is 274....

**TOWN CENTRE PLAN.** This has taken up a good deal of the Committee's time and a number of meetings were held before the final statement was submitted to the Devizes Borough Council and the County Planning Authority. This statement incorporated the views expressed by members at the meeting held to discuss the proposals. It is gratifying to note that the views put forward by the Trust have by and large been accepted by the Devizes Borough Council.

**FOUNTAIN.** The Committee were disturbed to hear that it was proposed to erect a stand to house the electric fountain pumping equipment. It was felt that such an erection would not be in keeping with the Market Place. The Committee therefore offered to defray the cost of obtaining expert advice as to whether the equipment could be stored underground or in one of the basins at present filled in with concrete.

**DISC PARKING.** The Committee put forward views supporting disc parking within the Borough but asked that the present signs in the Market Place should be removed or improved upon.

**ROAD NUMBERING.** It was suggested that steps ought to be taken to make this road more attractive and letters were sent to the owners and occupiers.

**POTTERNS CUTTING.** A communication has been sent to the County Council asking them to assure the Trust that all steps will be taken to make sure that the new cutting will be landscaped and planted with suitable bushes, with the stone wall in keeping with the village.

**WHARF.** It has been suggested to Devizes Borough Council that if the old Wilt County Council Depot is acquired by the Borough Council then the Borough Surveyor's depot might be moved there. The area made available at the Wharf could be made available for car parking and the general appearance of the Wharf with the Canal made more attractive.

**OLD TOWN HALL.** The Trust has been approached with a view to assisting the owners in restoring this historic building. The Trust would very much like to see the building improved but felt that plans for the restoration of the whole building should be made available to the Trust before any real suggestions could be made. To restore only the outside will not in itself be a real solution.

**TOWN WORKS CLUB.** The Chairman has on two occasions addressed Devizes Town Councils on the objects and aims of the Trust.

**SPENCER HISTORICAL SOCIETY.** The Trust has agreed to meet members of this Society and to show them interesting areas of the town. This event will be on the 16th May details of which will be announced at the A.G.M.

**GREAT PORCH.** The Trust has approached Mr. Goff to see if it is possible to move Great Porch to a new site.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS.**...these are now due. Please let the Treasurer have your subs promptly. More members are still urgently required and all members are asked to each try to enrol one new member.

**A.G.M.** See notice enclosed.

*Trust News, editions 1 and 2*

I have finally got around to looking at the Minute Book which I inherited from Tony Duck last year. I was delighted to find that it contained not only the Minutes of the Trust AGMs but also some of the early Newsletters. I thought that I would share the contents with you as it reveals how Devizes has changed but also how many things are still the same.

Newsletter No. 1 (*left*) is not dated but we know that it was issued in 1967 as it announces that the next members' meeting will be on 19th October 1967. The meeting would be a display of colour slides of Devizes and area by Mr Alan Carter and would be held at SOUTHBROOM SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOL. It was noted that, when these slides were shown at the Grammar School, great interest was aroused.

The number of members at the time was 240 despite the fact that Committee members had delivered letters to all those who had signed the petition (over 5000). It was felt that more members were urgently needed and an application form was included in the Newsletter urging members to pass this on to a friend.

Sound familiar?! Interestingly, the current membership is just over 260 so we're not doing too badly in comparison.

Much of the debate at the time seems to about changes to the road network, housing and tree preservation. Planning issues, then as now, formed the backbone of the Trust's aims.

Moving on to Newsletter 2, we have a date of April 1968 and the membership had increased to 330! So, we can no longer be smug about today's figure. Many more issues here including a Town Centre Plan, restoration of the fountain in the Market Place, Disc Parking, the future of the Wharf, restoration of the old Town Hall and the possibility of moving the Great Porch building.

The Trust really seems to be getting into its stride, becoming involved with Devizes Borough Council and Wiltshire County Planning Authority. Within a year of its formation, the Trust had become a force to be reckoned with! Long may it continue.

*A high-definition version of the above picture can be found on our website under "Publications".*

# The Trust at the May Fair



Our picture shows John Girvan (*left*) and Ian Sharp manning the Trust's stall at the May Fair in the Corn Exchange.

As well as fielding questions about membership (and hopefully recruiting a few members!), a number of Town Trails were sold.

## Lorna Haycock – Obituary

Lorna Haycock, a Trust member and Librarian at Wiltshire Council, died in April 2019 at the age of 89.

Lorna was a much respected local historian and was Vice Chair of the Trust from 1990 - 2002. We are grateful for her service to the Trust and offer our condolences to her family.

We understand that there will be a memorial service to Lorna in the summer.



[www.trustfordevizes.info](http://www.trustfordevizes.info)

## Dates for your diary

The Trust will have a stall on this year's Health and Wellbeing Day which will be on the Small Green on Saturday 15th June between 11am and 3pm.

The day is intended to 'Showcase adult health and wellbeing services and activities'.

There is a timetable of events for the day including demonstrations of dancing, yoga and archery. Please come along and say 'hello'.

## Devizes Air Quality and Transport Strategy Group *An update*

The Devizes Air Quality and Transport Strategy Group was set up in 2012 to oversee the delivery of the Devizes Transport Strategy and the development and delivery of the Devizes Community Air Quality Action Plan. The Trust is represented on the Group by Philippa Morgan and Richard Ormerod and meetings are held bi-monthly.

One of the key tasks of the Group is to monitor the quality of air in Devizes and we receive regular updates from the responsible Wiltshire Council officer.

We were encouraged in 2017 to see that air quality, as monitored by diffusion tubes positioned around Devizes, had improved to the extent that overall readings had dropped below the annual target of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. However, this appeared to have been a 'blip' and we were disappointed to hear that this improvement was reversed in 2018, with many of the diffusion tubes recording levels above the target.

What this means to Devizes is that we have returned to the position where the area from Shane's Castle through to Wadworths corner is above the permitted air quality limit under the national air

quality objectives. There is speculation about why the air quality has got worse but it is undoubtedly due, in part at least, to the traffic queues that we see every day in our town.

There are things that can be done to ameliorate this. Electric and hybrid cars are being developed but the incentives from the Government to encourage their purchase and sales of 'pure' electric cars account for less than 1% of new sales.

Something which all vehicle drivers can do, though, is to switch off the engine when the vehicle is static. Some cars now have 'stop-start' technology, but for most vehicles it is up to the driver to switch off the engine if the vehicle is likely to be stuck in traffic or parked for some time.

The Group will be looking at ways in which we can encourage drivers to switch off engines, for example where buses and coaches are waiting outside schools while waiting for pupils to leave school at the end of the day. We will also be looking for ways in which this can become part of drivers' regular habits. After all, we all want to improve air quality and turning off the engine is also a money saver!

## The Assize Courts

*David Dawson reports on progress*

Work has been continuing behind the scenes on this 10 year, £10 million project.

The most obvious activity has been the start of work to stop the further deterioration of the building. The initial steps are to clear gutters, downpipes and drains to make sure that water does not continue to seep into the walls. More work will tackle leaks in the roof and will mean that the building can begin to dry out.

The work is being undertaken by Gaigers, who are close to hand, and has been

made possible by support from the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust.

An open competition was launched on 15th May to choose the architects to begin work on the project – over 30 initial expressions of interest have already been received.

Once the architects have been appointed, probably in September, there will be an extensive consultation process, so that people can have their say and ideas can be gathered about how the building can be used.

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