

Chairman's Report

Planning matters are still a concern. The planning application for a large new housing estate adjacent to the Coate Road is still under consideration. There is a serious oversupply of new housing in the Devizes area which has caused huge strains on the local infrastructure. For example, the traffic problem has caused serious air pollution in the town centre and the local GP surgeries are overloaded. A new development would add to traffic problems on London Road and much of the commuter traffic would seek rat-runs through the inadequate lanes through Coate to Horton Road. The Trust and other organisations have submitted objections.

Crown Estates is a government organisation that owns land to the North and West of Devizes. It has proposals for a housing estate on the Horton Road, an extension of the new housing there. That location would be better than Coate Road for traffic flows in and out of the Town, but it could still be too many new houses for us to cope with at this time. We are also concerned about the effects on the Lay Wood nature reserve and we shall be objecting to the proposal.

It took a public meeting organised by the Trust several

Continued overleaf

Have your say about Devizes



The Market place in the 18th Century

In place of our usual Summer Social, the Trust is holding
a special public forum on
Friday 28th June at 7.00pm for a 7:30pm start
in the Assembly Rooms at the Town Hall

At our AGM in March, we asked members to complete a short survey to help us in our future direction. Feedback from that survey indicates that you are pleased that we have taken the lead in identifying key issues which affect our town and doing something to address them. We would now like to build on what we have done so far by looking at areas where improvement is needed to ensure that Devizes continues to be a thriving market town.

A lot of changes have taken place but we believe that there are some areas which need special attention. For example:

- **How could the Brittox be improved to make it more appealing?**
- **How could the approach to the town from the Canal and Wharf be improved and vice versa?**
- **Should we use The Market Place during the day for purposes other than car parking?**
- **How can we use the wealth of visitor attractions to attract tourists to visit our town and spend their money in Devizes?**

Your committee is clear that we need the support of members if we are to tackle these issues and we welcome your ideas for other areas which need to be tackled. We need your help in setting our future direction as a Trust. We are very keen to recruit more members who may have fresh ideas about what is needed so please bring along friends and neighbours. This is an open meeting and all will be welcome.

Refreshments will be provided.

years ago to nudge Wiltshire Council into taking the problem of local air pollution seriously, and there were accusations that we were being aggressive. Wiltshire Council has yet to propose any real solutions. The Wiltshire Traffic Strategy for Devizes: more cycling, tinkering with road junctions and trying to improve public transport at little or no cost, is not an answer. A recent test case in the Supreme Court threatens the UK Government with large fines for exceeding air pollution limits. We will end up paying through our taxes of course. That is a consequence of ongoing serious failures of planning at all levels.

The AGM March 2013

Our AGM is usually well attended and this year was no exception. We thank those who came. It is an important opportunity for members to express their opinions to guide the Committee for the future, as well as electing it.

Our guest speaker, Jane Scott, leader of Wiltshire Council, gave us a frank and comprehensive account of various local issues and the reasons why localism could or could not work in each case. She then answered questions from members. Those present showed their appreciation for her talk.

We had changed the format of the meeting for this year to minimise the formalities. The public meeting and the guest speaker was the first item and we began the AGM afterwards. The Chairman briefly reported on some current events and we produced a printed Report and Accounts for the year to the end of 2012. We would welcome members views.

Ted East

Air Pollution and the Wheels of God

Tony Sedgwick provides an update on this vital issue

All sorts of things emerge when you are moving home! As I was clearing out my study I came across a copy of Trust News dated August 2011. It was a memorable issue for me as it reported on the success of our 'No More Houses' rally and gave a detailed account of the Trust's concerns about the high level of air pollution being experienced at various places in the town centre.

I believe that it was the rally and that issue which pushed Wiltshire Council into dealing with the issue of pollution in a more serious way than hitherto. I had several meetings with the Council's Public Health Department and there were definite indications that action would follow. Sadly, my optimism was to prove unfounded. Whoever it was who said 'the wheels of God grind exceeding slow' had not had dealings with Local Government!

Progress has been made as far as the Council is concerned and, indeed to a limited extent that is true. The Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which existed in 2011 around Shanes Castle has been replaced by one which runs the length of the A361 and takes in the whole of the town centre. Also a Steering Group has been set up to produce a plan to reduce pollution. So far so good you might think.

A closer examination of the facts indicates that most progress has been made in moving the goal posts, so to speak. Whilst the EU law is explicit, Government have to act to reduce pollution where it exceeds what the EU and the World Health Organisation consider a safe level (as it does at seven monitoring points in Devizes), the UK Government allow Councils three years to achieve this once an AQMA has been declared. Shane's Castle was declared in 2010 so is the year when action had to be

taken. However, the Shane's Castle AQMA has been rolled into the new Devizes AQMA and so the three years can start again from the end of 2012. I don't call that progress!

The Steering Group is moving painfully forward and still does not have an agreed plan for reducing pollution. A Task and Finish Group, set up to determine what actions could be taken to reduce car use decided that the subject of commuter parking was off-limits, presumably because it is seen by politicians as a 'hot potato'. Any activity to reduce traffic has to be viewed in the light of Government forecasts which predict a 20% plus growth over the next 15 years. In my view nothing should be ruled out; everything should be examined and then decisions made as to where to take action.

What may galvanise the Council is a ruling last month by the Supreme Court that the Government was failing in its legal duty to protect citizens from the effects of air pollution, thereby underlining the force of the EU regulation. On the face of it, this opens up the way for the EU to impose huge fines and also for people who suffer as a result of air pollution to sue the Government.

There is ample evidence (much of it detailed in my article in 2011) that air pollution damages people's health and shortens life expectancy. My main concern in all of this is that the health issue, which is surely the most important, is hardly ever mentioned; rather officials prefer to talk about objectives and strategies.

Despite the lack of progress so far, I am hopeful that this latest legal development and the increasing threat of large EU fines will instil a degree of urgency into the debate. However, whether the wheels of local government can overtake those of God remains to be seen.

Devizes in the Media

By Philippa Morgan

Over the years, Devizes has had its fair share of coverage in films and on television. As well as the obvious human interest, these also provide a valuable insight into the way that our town has changed over the years. What follows is a list of those of which I am aware. If anyone knows of any features which I have missed, please write and let me know.

Probably the most well known movie which features Devizes is 'Far from the Madding Crowd'. The film, which is based on the Thomas Hardy novel of the same name, was shot in 1967 and starred Alan Bates, Terence Stamp, Julie Christie and Peter Finch. Filming took place in the Bear Hotel and the Corn Exchange, then in a more original state, with Devizes cast as 'Casterbridge'. The Market Place was also used for a fair. On piece of trivia is that Dave Swarbrick, later of Fairport Convention, can be seen playing a fiddle during the barn dance scene. The film is occasionally on one of the TV channels but can also be obtained from the usual outlets.

In 1962, Poet Laureate John Betjeman made six television programmes, each eulogizing the buildings of a different town. Three programmes retain the original soundtrack, whilst Nigel Hawthorne narrates on the others, drawing from Betjeman's original script. The areas looked at are: 'Swindon and North Lew'; 'Chippenham and Crewkerne'; 'Devizes'; 'Sherborne'; 'Sidmouth'; and 'Bath'. Copies of the DVD containing these programmes can be obtained from Devizes Books for £14.99.

The late Alec Clifton-Taylor was a much-respected architectural historian and writer. As a broadcaster, he presented a number of successful television programmes for the BBC. One of these was 'Six English Towns' which ran for three series' between 1977-1984. One of the programmes, broadcast on 30 September 1984, centred on the town of Devizes. Throughout the 30 minute programme, Clifton-Taylor is seen visiting all the town's many historical

buildings and landmarks including Devizes Castle, St James's Church, The Bear Hotel, the market and Corn Exchange and Wadworth Brewery. At each point in his journey he reflects on the history of each location and ruminates on the town's varied architecture which stems from the Norman period to Georgian and beyond. This can be watched on the BBC's website at the following link.

<http://tinyurl.com/6ET-Devizes>

Another programme on the BBC's website is 'Day out in Devizes'. This was filmed in 1977 and stars possibly the most well-known man in Devizes at the time - Sidney Dowse. He'd been town crier, mayor's secretary, official ale-taster, keeper of the town's treasured regalia and swimming baths manager. The full programme can be seen here.

<http://tinyurl.com/DayOut-Devizes>

Jon Pertwee was Dr Who in 1974 when some of the scenes from 'Planet of the Spiders' were shot at the Barracks on London Road. You can find out more about how the Barracks was used during filming here:

<http://tinyurl.com/DrWho-Devizes>

You can also get 'Planet of the Spiders' on DVD.

To bring us right up to date, BBC's *Escape to the Country*, Series 10 featured a property search around Devizes. Simon Fisher, Devizes Deputy Town Clerk, features talking about the canal. Unfortunately, this is no longer available to watch so look out for repeats. And, finally, the Town Hall, complete with Regency dancers, appeared on a recent BBC4 series about Regency Britain, 'Elegance and Decadence: the Age of the Regency'. Again, this is not available on the BBC website, so watch out for repeats.

I hope that this has been of interest and would recommend that you set aside some time to watch a few of these fascinating pieces of Devizes' history.

Museum News

Forthcoming events at the Museum. Contact the Museum or visit their website for more information

www.wiltshireheritage.org.uk/events

Walking Wiltshire's White Horses - launch reception

6:30 pm, Friday, 31 May, 2013

Come and join us to hear more about the Walking Wiltshire's White Horses project.

Walking Wiltshire's White Horses - family drop-in activities

10:30 am, Friday, 31 May, 2013

Take part in some great family arts-based activities and find out how to get involved in the Walking Wiltshire's White Horses project.

GEOLOGY THEMED OUTING: Seend

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 18 June, 2013

An evening walk led by Isobel Geddes.

A TALE OF TWO VILLAGES: An evening walk around Alton Barnes and Alton Priors

6:30 pm, Thursday, 27 June, 2013

Led by local historian David Carson. Find out fascinating facts about the two churches, what the villages used to look like, the civil war, and eye witness accounts of the machinery riots of 1830.

EXHIBITION: Inspirations from the Bronze Age: an exhibition by six outstanding contemporary designers and makers

10:00 am, Saturday, 06 July, 2013

An exhibition bringing together archaeologists and designers/makers to explore artistic creativity in the Bronze Age. *From 6 July to 1 September 2013.*

A message from the Treasurer

Thank you to those members who returned a completed evaluation form. Some of the comments made were useful and will be acted upon.

I would ask that those of you who pay by standing order would check the amount that is being given to the Trust as some of these are coming through for £5 or £8 and the subscription is £12 for 2013. Those of you who pay by cheque or cash may find that the former does not get deducted from your bank statement very fast! That is because I do not pay money into the bank until I have enough to make it worth their while processing it.

Inez Skinner

Are you online?

Would you prefer to receive your Trust News by email?

Printing and posting the Trust News is one of the major costs incurred by the Trust.

If you would be happy to receive your copy of Trust News by email it would help to reduce our outgoings, saving paper as well as the time spent by our volunteers stuffing envelopes!

To register for this service, send an email to info@trustfordevizes.info.

Dates for your diary

Our next social will take the form of a public forum on **Friday 28th June** at the Town Hall - see front page for details.

Our Autumn social will take place on **Friday 13th September at 7pm** at the Museum.

Planning News

A roundup of major issues

Assize Courts

Despite planning permission being granted in May 2012 to turn the building into flats, work has not yet started and the building continues to be an eyesore. The Trust has tried to contact Gatewell Ltd, the current owners, but to no avail. We raised the issue at the recent Community Area Board meeting and are awaiting a response from Wiltshire Council.

Quakers Walk Care Village

Outline planning permission was granted on appeal in November 2012 since when the 11 acre site has been marketed by estate agents Carter Jonas. As far as we are aware, the land has not yet been sold.

St Peter's School, Bath Road

The former St Peter's School site was one of the sites included in the recent consultation exercise carried out by Devizes Town Council for the Neighbourhood Plan. The site would accommodate up to 21 homes.

Devizes Car Centre, New Park Street

This land, formerly a petrol station, has been identified by Wiltshire Council as 'land allocated for development' and is now for sale through Hamptons International.

Browfort

The former Wiltshire Council office building is also for sale through Bruton Knowles Residential. Bruton Knowles are inviting 'expressions of Interest for the whole site or any part thereof'. The Gazette and Herald reported in November last year that the buildings could be demolished to make way for homes.

Crown Estate - Lay Wood

Following the recent public exhibition outlining the proposed development, the Trust hopes to meet with the developers to present our detailed comments on the plans.

Visit the Trust website

The Trust website is packed with information about Devizes and archive material, including past editions of Trust News. In the interest of transparency, we are now including the minutes of our Committee meetings on the website. You can access the website from this link: <http://www.trustfordevizes.info>

Trust News is published by:

The Trust For Devizes,
Fairfield House,
Potterne Road,
Devizes SN10 5AE

Editor - Philippa Morgan
email info@trustfordevizes.info

The officers of the Trust are :

Chairman	Edward East	email edward.east@virgin.net
Hon. Secretary	Tony Duck	email tonyduckworton@aol.com
Hon. Treasurer	Inez Skinner	email inezskinner@aol.com

The Trust is a Registered Charity No 259653



www.trustfordevizes.info