



# Newsletter December 2014



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## SEASON'S GREETINGS

On behalf of Peterborough Civic Society may I take this opportunity of wishing all members and supporters of the Society  
a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year**.

In 2015 we will continue to represent your interests and provide an interesting and stimulating series of talks, events and summer visits.

*David Turnock* (Chairman)

## WAITROSE

Probably few would disagree that Peterborough city centre has been enhanced by the construction of an enlarged Waitrose with surface level parking readily accessed by car. Clearly it has improved the setting of the Railway Station, provided a quality facility for homeward-bound rail travellers and improved the upper-end food store 'offer' of Peterborough.

But have you tried getting to it by foot, cycle or wheelchair? From the Station or Thorpe Road is fine. But from the north (e.g. Mayors Walk) the 'desire-line' takes you along the car park access road with your back to incoming cars swinging in from Bright St roundabout. There is no segregated footway. And from the northern part of the city centre you have to cross Westgate and the various in and out roads of the Queensgate car parks and bus station before reaching the new surface-level crossing over Bourges Blvd. And if you are in a wheel chair you also have to take a long circuitous route to avoid the steps down into the car park on your way to the shop's entrance.

We have raised these points with Waitrose. Helpfully, local manager Jonathan Ashley-Webb, took our concerns seriously and has discussed the Mayors Walk access matter with his property manager. It appears that the City Council considers that the provision of a pedestrian route there would encourage jay-walking across Mayors Walk. We feel this is a mistaken approach and will be pressing the matter further. As to the route from Westgate, hopefully this will be greatly improved when the North Westgate development comes forward.



## NENE VALLEY LIVING

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WIN! WIN! WIN! Free tickets to top summer events  
COULD YOU RUN A B&B? Owners tell all

One of our committee members, Kem Mehmed, pens excellent articles under the Our Heritage banner in alternate monthly issues of Nene Valley Living magazine. They serve both to highlight an issue of concern to the Society and lift the profile of the Society. Look out for his pieces if you receive or come across the magazine. To date he has written on Conservation Area appraisals (in the April edition) the Bridge House murals (June), the Civic Society's historic building plaque scheme (August) and the Sage's Tower landmark (October).

Kem is always on the lookout for subjects and items of interest for future editions of Nene Valley Living. If anyone has suggestions please either contact Kem directly or, alternatively, one of the newsletter editors.

Thanks for all your efforts Kem!

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE NORTH WESTGATE SCHEME?

It is exactly a year since we trumpeted a newly publicised multi-screen/ retail/housing scheme for North Westgate (the vacant land north of the Queensgate car parks blighting this sector of the city). We were hoping for a planning application by mid 2014. None came, so we have initiated meetings with the main players (Hawksworth Securities as main landowner, the City Council and hopefully Invesco Real Estate as Queensgate owners and part landowners in North Westgate) to gain an understanding of the new causes of delay. Watch this space – we will report back to you as soon as we know more!

## BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Peterborough was a national leader in adopting a List of Buildings of Local Interest following joint work between ourselves and the City Council. ( These are not Statutory Lists of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest, but the next level down, afforded a measure of local protection in the planning system.)

Two years ago at a previous Civic Voice Convention our David Jost urged Civic Voice to campaign nationally for all Civic Societies to similarly work with their Councils to produce Local Lists. They took his advice on board and a series of workshops are being held around the country to share the experience of societies like ourselves with others contemplating similar action. Peterborough hosted one for the East of England in November. Presentations from ourselves, The Norwich Society and Braintree and District Civic Society and from Civic Voice's national co-ordinator, Ian Harvey, made for an event which the society reps attending found very worthwhile. It was topped off with a City Centre tour led by our Henry Duckett.

## GOOD DESIGN AND THE CITY CENTRE PLAN

The City Council's Peterborough Design and Construction Awards took place last month. We were pleased to be represented by Peter Lee on the judging panel alongside retired architect John Wilkinson and Cllr Peter Hiller, Cabinet member for Planning and Housing Services.

We have previously reported on our concerns about the lack of commitment to good design, inadequate protection of views through to the Cathedral in the City Centre Plan and the representations we made at the Examination in Public into the Plan. The Inspector's report has been received. She took on board our points about Cathedral views and in response the Council has made some minor amendments to the Plan. That is good, but as with any policy statement it is the commitment that is brought to its implementation that counts. We'll have to see. We still await a decision by the Council on the future of the moribund Design Review Panel.

## CIVIC VOICE AND THE LOCALISM ACT

Committee members David Turnock and Peter Lee attended the annual convention and AGM of Civic Voice, the umbrella body for Civic Societies, in Canterbury on 24/25<sup>th</sup> October. These are excellent opportunities to catch up with the many friends we made when we hosted the first AGM of Civic Voice at the GN Hotel in 2010, get under the skin of some current issues of concern and be re-energised by some of the most vigorous societies around the country. (Oh, all right then, and go on guided tours of the city and a pub crawl in the evening....)



**Assets of Community Value.** A leading issue this year was the opportunity provided by the Localism Act for local bodies to identify Assets of Community Value (ACV's). Once identified, interested community bodies have the opportunity to intervene in the event of the Asset coming up for sale and raise the funds needed to acquire and retain it in its present use (if they can do so in the space of 6 months). So far in Peterborough two properties have been registered as ACVs. They are the Green Back Yard in Oundle Road (currently seeking to raise the funds to buy their City Council owned site), and the POSH ground (nominated by the Supporters Trust in order to make any future disposal a more transparent process). Around the country the take-up of this power is very varied (with Uttlesford District Council topping the list having of its own volition identified 172 ACV's!). Across the country some 1500 ACV's had been identified, including pubs, libraries, shops, car parks, toilets and playing fields. The legislation is far from perfect and Civic Voice is pressing government for improvements. But the message was clear: use the new powers, however imperfect, or, in all probability, lose them. A serious challenge for our Society to address in association with other community groups.



The **Green Back Yard** environmental project launched its fund-raising campaign with Tim Smit of the Eden Centre contributing the first £10 to buy a square foot of land. Your Society has contributed £100. If the purchase price of the site is not raised, the funds will be put towards relocation of this important facility. For further information visit their website

[www.thegreenbackyard.com](http://www.thegreenbackyard.com)



**Neighbourhood Plans.** Another major plank of the Localism Act is the ability of Parish Councils or other appropriately constituted bodies to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their areas, identifying the scale and nature of further expansion of their settlements. Several Parish Councils around Peterborough have commenced work on their plans which, if they survive independent examination and a referendum (and perhaps judicial review by aggrieved land-owners and developers) will carry equal statutory weight to the Local Plans produced by District Councils. Not really a matter for the Civic Society, but something to keep an eye on.

## LOTTERY WINNERS

The Lottery draw took place at our December meeting with the following winners:

- Jed Jarrett      £60
- Kem Mehmed   £50
- Vince Parker   £40
- David Jost     £30
- Jeremy Roberts £30
- Susan Anstruther £20



Thanks to all for supporting the Society by participating.

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

## THE CIVIC SOCIETY AND APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Each fortnight a Plans Group meets to review the latest applications for planning permission and listed building consent. The following is a selection of the cases it has commented upon together with the subsequent decision made by City Council since your last newsletter. Others await decision and will be reported later.

The reference numbers have been given so that should you wish to examine the plans, you can access them via this page on Peterborough City Council's web-site:  
[http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning\\_and\\_building.aspx](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building.aspx) and by clicking on Planning & Building Online Register.

13/01752/FUL. North Lodge Ufford: dwelling. We objected- major faults with design in this Conservation Area- inappropriately shallow pitch to roof etc. Revised scheme needed. Revised plans met our objections. Awaiting decision.

14/00637/FUL. Former Little Chef A1 Wansford: Change from vacant restaurant to offices. We warmly welcomed this change of use which sensitively retains and restores the Art Deco character of this land-mark building. Consent 27<sup>th</sup> June.

14/00897/FUL. 2 Queen St and Fortune Buildings Cowgate: Removal of existing and insertion of redesigned shopfronts. We welcomed this replacement of a disparate collection of shop fronts with new ones better related to their upper elevations. The scheme included a welcome amendment to the colour scheme of the Leeds Building Society fascia. All part of the Cowgate design improvements. Consent 18<sup>th</sup> July.

14/01033/FUL. 270 Eastfield Rd: Part-redevelopment of offices to care home. Retaining the frontage of the original house of local interest, this was welcomed as a major improvement of the earlier complete redevelopment scheme. But we suggested that the closeness of part of the scheme to the neighbour needed revision. This was achieved in revised plans which we supported. Consented- committee decision October.

14/01352/FUL. 8 Geneva St Peterborough: Change of use to restaurant. We were concerned that proposed elevation unsatisfactory. Opportunity missed to create a balanced elevation. Revisions to elevation secured by PCC but Society's concern considered too difficult to meet due to internal toilet arrangement. Permitted 24<sup>th</sup> September.

14/01492/LBC. 3,4 & 5 Minster Precincts. Replacement balustrade in hardwood to frontage to same design as existing. We complained that detailed drawings were unreadable. Revised drawings produced and discussed with us. Permitted 18<sup>th</sup> August.

14/01534/LBC. Cock Inn, Werrington: illuminated signs. No objection to signs, but watering system of pipes to hanging baskets unattractive and should be removed. Planners took up concern with agent. Applicant not prepared to remove them but would paint them out when the elevation repainted. Consent 6<sup>th</sup> October.

14/01573/FUL. Northey Road: Use of land for one extended gypsy family and facilities block. We objected-site within and would adversely affect Flag Fen Scheduled Ancient Monument site of national importance. Refused 10 December.

## WINTER TALKS – A REMINDER

Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> January	Neil Mitchell	The Life and Works of John Thompson – builder
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> February	Paul Hutton OBE	Recent developments at Sacrewell Farm + Nene Park Trust
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	David Gray	Peterborough men killed in the Great War

\*\*\* All meetings at 7.30 p.m. at St Mark's Church Hall, Lincoln Road, Peterborough PE1 2SN \*\*\*