



Newsletter July 2020



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Dear members and friends,

I am delighted to enclose a copy of the new revised, expanded brochure on **Peterborough's Blue Plaques**. We hope you enjoy reading it. It marks the installation of a further 15 blue plaques to celebrate more of our finest people and buildings, thus making a total of 36 in and around the city centre. We have also written articles for the Peterborough Telegraph (and our web-site) which go into greater detail on each plaque. They are being published weekly and started on 2nd July. Our grateful thanks go to Toby Wood and his team for all this work and to the support of the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Peterborough City Council.

Sadly, of course, during lock-down the more social of our activities have had to be cancelled. Back in March we were all set to tell you about four **Summer visits**, but all had to be cancelled along with our **April and May talks**. Your committee, mindful that social distancing will be sensible, if not a requirement, for some time has reluctantly decided to **cancel talks meetings** which would normally take place in September to December this year. We are planning to resume with an AGM in January. We will tell you more nearer the time. The September **Heritage Open Days** will also not take place this year due to so many uncertainties over health, social distancing and insurance.

But meanwhile the Society is not resting. Your committee continues to meet monthly thanks to Zoom technology to continue the work you would expect of us.

Publicity. Toby Wood and Kem Mehmed lead in the production of monthly articles for Peterborough Telegraph and interviews on radio and TV. Our public profile has probably never been higher.

Planning applications. We continue to check the weekly lists of planning applications and submit statements of support (e.g. Deans Close application to convert from unlet offices to residential), opposition (e.g. the 8-storey scheme on the Solstice site in Northminster road with its adverse impact on views through to the Cathedral), or suggestions for improvement.

The Beales site in Westgate. A suggestion from member Judy Jones inspired Kem Mehmed to produce a sketch scheme incorporating the relocated Market in this building and its site. This has received plenty of press publicity and we hope its viability will be fully explored by the Council and the site owners. We continue to work to try and keep issues such as this alive.

Vivacity. We are seriously concerned that so far the City Council and Vivacity have not found a way of continuing their relationship, to the extent that Vivacity is handing back its contract to manage our heritage, culture and sports services. Severely reduced Government support for local authorities over the ten years of Vivacity's existence has impacted on all services but it is especially sad that the Vivacity charitable model, so promising and creative in attracting new funds into Peterborough, has been brought to its knees by a combination of reducing support and the Covid-19 pandemic. We are pressing our MPs and others to do their utmost to ensure that the shutters do not stay closed on the Lido, Key theatre, libraries, Museum and Flag Fen and our sports facilities. However there seems little doubt that we will all need to play our part, whether in volunteering or using these services more.

Channels of communication. We keep these open with the City Council, whether directly with senior councillors and officers or through ensuring our voice is heard in the preparation of funding programmes such as the Towns Fund bid, or participating in the Community Leaders Forum so ably hosted by Athene Communications.

We hope you are staying clear of the virus and look forward to seeing you again as soon as we can meet safely. Meanwhile I hope you will continue to support the work of the Society through your membership.

With best wishes,

David Turnock, Chairman



New blue plaque being installed on the Guildhall