



Newsletter April 2016



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ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP (APPG) ON CIVIC SOCIETIES



On Tuesday 8th March David Turnock, the Society's chairman, attended this group at the House of Commons. The aim of the meeting was to consider the challenges facing cathedral cities and historic towns, given the current drive for growth and development, and to engage MPs and policy makers with these challenges. How can the new housing vital to development be accommodated within historic towns and cities?

The event was attended by approximately 100 people from Civic Societies around the country together with a number of MPs. The event was chaired by Craig Mackinlay MP who chairs this APPG.

Speakers at the very informative day included Griff Rhys-Jones, President of Civic Voice, Duncan McCallum of Historic England and Richard Bate, author of a major report on *The Sustainable Growth of Cathedral Cities and Historic Towns*.

The event was organised by the Historic Cathedral Cities Alliance (HCCA) and brings together civic societies which are concerned about these issues, working under the umbrella of Civic Voice, and with financial support from the All Churches Trust. David Turnock is part of the Steering Group for the HCCA and will be involved in future events up to the next Civic Voice Conference in October 2016 when the HCCA Group will report to all Civic Societies in the country.

The HCCA is a network of individuals and organisations which aims to:

- Share ideas about the challenges facing historic towns and cities, through information exchange by social media and twice-yearly meetings;
- Consider and publicise a variety of solutions to the challenges identified;
- Represent these cities and give them more power to shape their futures in ways which protect their heritage.

We hope that this initiative will continue with regular dialogue and meetings with MPs so as to ensure that the very special parameters that apply to historic towns and cathedral cities are fully understood by politicians and government policy ensures that their special environmental qualities are preserved into the future.

GREEN SQUARE, LONG CAUSEWAY

Peterborough City Council has recently completed the new Green Square on Long Causeway. This area has been redesigned and now contains a circular centrepiece with quotes from poet John Clare. On the surrounding benches there are quotes from children from local primary schools. It is hoped that this area can, on occasion, be used as an outdoor teaching, exhibition and demonstration space.



SUMMER VISITS 2016 – BOOK NOW!

As last year, all our visits are on a 'get yourself there' basis, but we encourage car sharing - see booking form enclosed. **Deadline for booking forms to be received by Pauline – Wednesday 11th May.**

Hunstanton: 11.00am Tuesday 17th May **Guided Tour then free time**



Our friends in Hunstanton Civic Society, especially Andrew Murray, will arrange guided tours around the town to see buildings designed by Butterfield, Skipper and Ibbertson and taking in a number of heritage highlights. We will make our own way there, park and meet at 11a.m. at the Civic Society's own Heritage Centre (behind the Princess Theatre, its address is 15 The Green Hunstanton PE36 5AH). We will then have a guided tour in the morning, have free time to find lunch (Fishers Restaurant's fish and chips comes with a recommendation) and explore by ourselves in the afternoon, perhaps following one of the town's heritage trails (or just languishing in the sunshine!)

Getting there: allow 90 minutes for travel and parking.

Parking: There is a small car park behind the Princess Theatre and parking at Valentine Road Council offices or Southend Road or at the Cliff-Top car park.

Cost: £8

Stibbington Hall: 2.00pm Monday 20th June **Tour of house and garden and visit to Stibbington Church**

Stibbington Hall (address: Church Lane Stibbington PE8 6LP) stands diagonally opposite the church in the main village of Stibbington east of the A1. A fine, ornate Jacobean house it is the home of Rob and Helen Facer who have generously agreed to give us a tour of both the house, no doubt with tales of its various 'merry widow' owners, and gardens. The church is very close by and an opportunity to see inside is being arranged. If time permits a walk round the village would round off the visit.



Cost £7 (mainly a contribution to Stibbington church)

Apethorpe Hall: 1.00pm or 3.30pm Thursday 14th July **Tour of house and garden**



Apethorpe Hall, near Oundle in Northamptonshire, was a favourite haunt of King James I. After falling into disrepair under its previous owner, English Heritage acquired it and spent £8m doing basic repairs and renovation before finding a buyer. Under its new owner, French professor, diplomat and academic, Jean Christophe Iseux, Baron von Pfetten, the building is now called Apethorpe Palace (well why not!). Although we last visited it in 2012, this was prior to the new owner taking over. We won't be meeting him but English Heritage staff will lead tours round the house whilst he is away. It will be an opportunity to refresh our memories of this superb house and hopefully see what moves the new owner has made to complete the renovation work and make it fully habitable.

The tour will last about 90 minutes and you will need to be able to climb stairs. Please note: there are two times for this visit – please remember to specify which one on the Visits form.

Cost £9

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following is a selection of the cases your Plans Groups have looked at since the last newsletter and decisions made on previously submitted comments. The reference numbers are given so that you can examine the plans if you wish on the City Council's web site

http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/planning_and_building.aspx

and by clicking on the Planning and Building Online Register.

Queensgate rooftop extension for Cinema and food hall. (15/01013/FUL) The Society expressed its concern that this would undermine the viability of a North Westgate redevelopment.

Current situation: Both this and an outline application by Hawksworth Securities for the redevelopment of North Westgate went to the Planning Committee on 29th September and both were approved. Hawksworth subsequently made an application for Judicial Review of the Council's Queensgate decision. They were aggrieved that the Council had not given sufficient consideration to the effect of the Queensgate scheme on the viability of the North Westgate proposals as a major contribution to securing the regeneration of a run-down sector of the city. Both schemes had anchor multi-screen cinemas and clearly there is only room for one in this part of the City Centre. This argument, alongside design concerns, was the essence of your Society's objection to the Queensgate scheme.

In response, whilst the legal processes take their course, Queensgate have submitted a new application for their scheme (16/00252/FUL). Almost identical to their previous one, it is now supplemented by an assessment of the likely impact on North Westgate (which they argue is unviable anyway), and arguments as to the special importance of enhancing the Queensgate offer with more retail, food and a leisure component to strengthen it as the heart of the City Centre. They have also added a letter from Odeon confirming that they are fully committed to moving into the cinema in Queensgate, clearly a step to counter the rumours that the cinema was only a spoiler to undermine North Westgate.

Your society has repeated its original concerns.

Residential development (610 dwellings and school) E of Alwalton Hill (15/01431/OUT) Society recommended refusal - land allocated for employment purposes and relatively isolated. Insufficient facilities proposed for a settlement. **Outcome:** Approved at Planning Committee 8th March.

Residential development (80 houses - outline) Uffington Road Barnack (15/01840/OUT). This major development is outside the village envelope line, supposed to contain development. Its justification is that the City Council can no longer claim that it has 5 years supply (plus 20% margin) of readily developable housing land, as required by Government edict. This is a technical point that is likely to give rise to more random applications of this kind before the Council has a new Local Plan in place. Barnack Parish Council has made an impressive case against the scheme and we have endorsed those objections. **Outcome:** refused 22nd March.

Demolition of public toilets Corner Eastfield Rd and Newark Ave (16/00060/PRIOR) This building combines a shelter at the front with toilets behind. The shelter provides a useful function and is used - as it is beside the Cemetery entrance - but the toilet is a nuisance. Once we discovered that the shelter is staying we raised no objections. **Outcome:** Allowed to proceed.

91 dwellings west of Sandpit Road Thorney (16/00160/OUT) The Civic Society did not object to this proposal but requested that a condition or legal agreement be in place to ensure that the Public Open Space adjoining the main access road be provided in perpetuity with adequate financial provision for its maintenance. With regard to 'affordable housing', the number shown on the indicative plan should form the basis of the approval although it was accepted that this may be subject to negotiation around the viability of the development. **Outcome:** awaited.

30 bed student accommodation block at Brassey Close (16/00260/FUL) This was a resubmission of an earlier scheme to which the Society objected on grounds of overdevelopment, inadequate provision for external facilities and adverse effect on the a New England cottages Conservation Area. Whilst some of our concerns had been addressed the main points on objection remained. **Outcome:** awaited.

Memorial Hospital reconstruction details (16/00045/DISCH). The scheme details how the retained façade of the Memorial Hospital will be knitted into a reconstruction of its other walls and roof in facsimile. Carefully detailed and a scheme worthy of our support (given the amount of demolition previously accepted). **Outcome:** Details approved 18th March.

PLAQUES UPDATE

The plaques group – Henry Duckett, Richard Hillier, Tony Knighton, Peter Lee, Pauline Sidebottom and Toby Wood – continues to make progress towards the new blue plaques and associated trail leaflet. We now have the text and location for twenty plaques now virtually finalised and are seeking the appropriate permissions from the relevant building owners – this is the part that is taking time and patience! So far we have had very positive feedback from all those who we have spoken to, including Vivacity and the Queensgate management. Rest assured that, as soon as everything is finalised, full details will be shared with Society members prior to any full public launch.

Toby gave a presentation to the monthly meeting at St Mark's Church Hall on 9th March and members offered their views and opinions, all of which have been presented to the plaques group.

IN BRIEF

Civic Society archives – we have collected items from various members over the past few months. Particular thanks must go to Don Low and David Jost for their meticulously referenced contributions. The process is now complete and we have taken boxes to Vivacity's Archive Service so that the material can be professionally sorted, stored and catalogued for the benefit of researchers and other interested parties in the future. The then 'Peterborough Society' was formed in December 1952 and the pre-spellcheck minutes of the first meeting are reproduced as a separate additional sheet to this newsletter.

Nene Living – Kem Mehmed has been busy again and has produced an article on Wansford Station for the March 2016 edition of Nene Living which is now widely available. If you are unable to find a copy Waitrose usually has a pile!

Dr Chambers – We were sad to hear of the passing of Dr Gordon Chambers, long-time surgeon at the District Hospital and member of the Society. An obituary will appear in our next Annual Report and Review.



Sale of Westgate Church – We see that Westgate Church building has been put up for sale. It has long been an important landmark in the city centre and has been promised a commanding position in a new square within a largely redeveloped North Westgate. As a Building of Local Importance, it should be kept and a new use found retaining the essentials of its design and its contribution to the street scene. We will watch developments with interest.

Guildhall Walk - Rather poor weldmesh fencing has been erected by Barclays across part of the entrance to this walk between Barclays Bank and Pizza Express in Church Street. Apparently anti-social behaviour, graffiti and drug taking have taken place and the bank argues that there is no established public right of way through it and they are free to close it. We don't agree. A planning application has been made for the fencing and gate and the intention is to close it outside bank working hours. We have submitted an objection on the basis that the right of way is well established by virtue of usage (under section 31 of the Highways Act 1980), and the gates are quite inappropriate in appearance for a site in a City Centre Conservation Area. We have some sympathy with the authorities and the Bank, but if every corner of the city that attracts the occasional nuisance is to be fenced off where does it stop? Presumably the understorey of the Guildhall will be next!

Marks and Spencer's Bridge Street clock – at 11.00pm on Tuesday 15th March Toby Wood delivered a letter to the manager of Marks and Spencer's in Queensgate asking that the clock above the now-closed Bridge Street branch remain in situ for posterity. At 11.30pm he took this photograph of workmen taking the clock down, apparently in preparation for its refurbishment at a works in Derby and then eventual re-erection outside another M&S store somewhere else in the country. This photograph subsequently appeared in the Peterborough Telegraph on Thursday 24th March. Oh well – you win some and lose some!



PETERBOROUGH SOCIETY

Inaugural Meeting record 1952

A RECORD of the INAUGRAL MEETING of THE PETERBOROUGH SOCIETY

A Meeting of a few citizens of Peterborough interested in the preservation of ancient buildings was held at the Angel Hotel Peterborough at 3.30 p.m., in the afternoon of Tuesday, December 16th 1952, at the invitation of Mr. H. B. Paten. The following were present:-

Mr. H. B. Paten; Mrs. M. A. Paten;
Messrs. K.G.Fryer; T.Powell; C.Sharman; J.Crisp;
G.Amies; E.Smedley, W.C.Wilkinson, H.G.Merchant;
W.T.Jeffries; A.Manton Baxter, E.T.Channell;
J.G.Warwick; Urwick Smith; the Rev. Canon J.L.
Cartwright and Mrs. E.M.Benstead (Mayoress).

Regrets for non attendance were received from:-

MR. FR. SKEVINGTON; MR & MRS D. CRISP; MR A W RUDDLE;
MR R.H. MOTTRAM (NORWICH SCTH); LT COL. THE HON. PETER BRASSEY;
MESSRS. SIMON EVERARD; W.E.WALLER; J.P.BRISTOW; P.CROWSON;
MISS ENID HARTLEY; CANON L.E.W. BOSLEY; MRS E.M. WHITTOME

Mr. Paten drew the attention of the Meeting to the changes which had taken place in the past 50 years and illustrated this with old prints of parts of the city. He mentioned the achievements of the Norwich Society which by influence gained over the past 30 years was doing much to preserve for posterity the heritage of the citizens of that city. Following an interesting discussion Mrs. E.M.Benstead proposed that a Society be formed with similar aims. The proposal was seconded by Mr. Urwick Smith and carried unanimously. It was agreed that the Society be known as "The Peterborough Society", that it be commenced by enrolling as Members all those interested at a subscription of 5/- per annum, the Rules and Objects to be drawn for the approval of the Members and that the business be conducted by a Committee composed of the Officers with powers to co-opt, until such time as an Executive Committee be elected by the Members.

Mr. H. B. Paten was elected Chairman of the Society.
Mr. T. Powell - Honorary Solicitor.
Mr. A. Manton Baxter - Honorary Secretary.
Mr. H. G. Merchant - Honorary Treasurer,
Mr. E. T. Channell, Honorary Assistant Secretary.

It was agreed that the election of a President be left until such time as the Committee were satisfied that the Society had been successfully launched.

Harry B. Paten
Chairman
17.11.53