



PETERBOROUGH CIVIC SOCIETY

Newsletter September 2023



produced by Peter Lee 01780 782703 peter.g.lee@btinternet.com
Toby Wood 01733 732784 tobywood2008@gmail.com

IT'S PETERBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN TIME AGAIN!

The current Local Plan for the Peterborough City Council area was adopted in 2019 and allocated housing and employment sites for the period 2016 – 2036. It has to be updated every 5 years to meet rising demand for such sites and to align it with national policy and regulation changes and other changed circumstances. The City Council has now launched the process for revising the plan to fit it for the period 2023-2044.

The key document today is the **'Issues and Options Consultation Document'**. It is seeking views on a range of subject areas to inform the production of a Draft Plan next summer. It doesn't identify specific sites for development at this stage, but does seek views on settlement hierarchy, growth options, village boundaries, City Centre regeneration, design, responses to climate change, biodiversity and many other topics. If this sounds dull, you may want to reflect on the City Council's initial thoughts on buildings over 10 storeys high in the City Centre (page 21). That is one of a number of issues which your Society's committee will certainly be commenting upon.

We hope that you will read the document on the Council's web-site and submit your comments to the Council either by e-mail or on-line as soon as possible. It would be helpful to our team working on this if you copied them to our chairman David Turnock at davidturnock19@gmail.com.

The deadline for comments to the City Council is midnight on 15th September.

NATIONAL CIVIC DAY



Saturday 17 June was National Civic Day and the Civic Society decided to 'do its bit' by organising a litter pick. We assembled at the Key Theatre, then proceeded to collect discarded items on the Embankment near the Lido and then the car park and area near to the Boongate roundabout. It must be reported that there are large numbers of cans and glass bottles, many of which had clearly been thrown out of vehicles on the nearby slip road. Many thanks to those members and friends who contributed – your efforts were much appreciated.



THE EMBANKMENT RIVER BRIDGE

A number of the much-trumpeted Towns Fund projects seem to be wading through the mire of rising costs and challenges in raising match-funding. But one of them, the bridge to link the Embankment to Fletton Quays, is now fully funded so shows every sign of going ahead. That's really good news. It is a project that your Society has pursued for some time. With increasing residential accommodation in the City Centre, most of it without on-site recreational space, the Embankment will be increasingly important, most obviously for the residents of Fletton Quays.

LET'S GO TO PETERBOROUGH FOR A HOLIDAY!

The following article appeared in the Peterborough Telegraph on 20 July 2023.

“Let’s go to Peterborough for a holiday”. Now that’s a phrase that you don’t hear very often. In fact there will be readers who chortle at the very idea of Peterborough being considered as a holiday destination. But I contend that, with the right approach and marketing, that’s exactly what could happen. Let me give you two actual examples.

Two seasons ago, when Posh were in the Championship, we played Birmingham City at home for the first time for many years. An away supporter walked from the station, through Cathedral Square to the football ground. He was so impressed by what he saw that he and his friends came back to the city a few weeks later and spent a long weekend here. The second example is a woman health professional who I recently met at a conference at our splendid new university, ARU Peterborough. She told me that she had never been to the city before but had enjoyed a lunchtime walk around the city centre. She said she would definitely return to spend a few days here. One downside to this story is that she also asked me if here was a bus that ran to Flag Fen. Sadly I had to tell her, “No”.

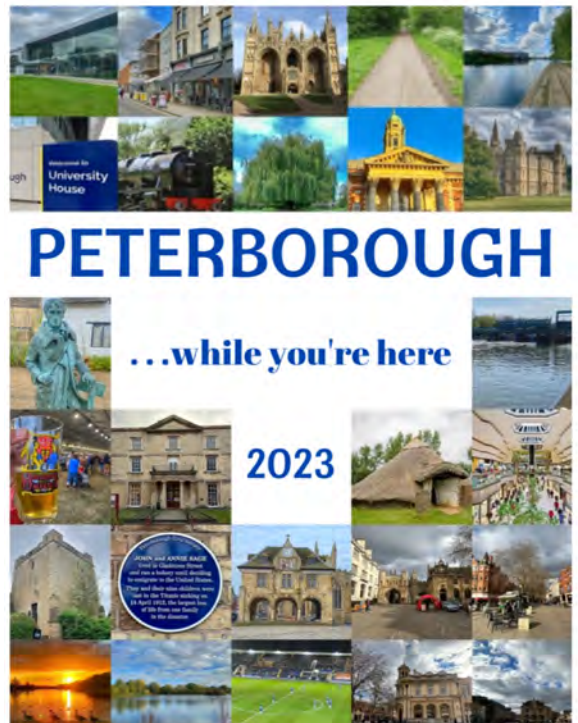
Some readers may mock me for suggesting that Peterborough could become a holiday destination, but it already is! I am reliably informed that over 5,000 people regularly come to Ferry Meadows and stay at the camping and caravan facilities. Those people are always looking for things to do, so why not ensure that they are fully aware of what Peterborough can offer.

It has to be said that currently Peterborough is not good at promoting the city as a cohesive whole. Indeed, type Peterborough into Google and the question ‘What is Peterborough famous for’ pops up. Click on the link and the following phrase is shown – ‘Peterborough is primarily known for its historic cathedral, but you’ll find additional history and modern family-friendly fun here, too’. All rather vague, I’m sure you’ll agree. UK.Hotels.com goes a bit further and lists the ‘10 Best things to do in Peterborough’. That list comprises Peterborough Cathedral, Nene Valley Railway, Ferry Meadows Country Park, Railworld Wildlife Haven, Peterborough Museum, Sacrewell Farm, Flag Fen Archaeology Park, The Key Theatre, Elton Hall and Gardens and Showcase Cinema De Lux.

Of course we could all add other attractions to that list – Longthorpe Tower, Thorpe Hall, Burghley House and John Clare Cottage. And therein lies the possible way forward. In Peterborough most of us know of the value of individual parts of our city’s heritage but perhaps we are poor at helping both residents and visitors make connections between them, thus promoting Peterborough as that aforementioned cohesive whole. Why not encourage people to visit Flag Fen in the morning and John Clare Cottage in the afternoon? The city must encourage people to make those connections – perhaps with a Day Rover admission ticket or perhaps by literally connecting our tourist attractions with a regular, circular bus service.

I know that those involved with Peterborough Tourism Network Group are currently thinking of ways to promote the city and to try to encourage Peterborough’s own people, new and old, to visit the city’s attractions. I fully realise that economic times are hard and money tight. However now is surely the time to plan for the time when the economy starts to strengthen. The challenge for Peterborough is, can we do it, have we the political will to do it and do we have people with the ‘glint in the eye’ to make things work?”

Toby Wood



SUMMER VISITS



If you missed all of our Summer visits this year, you missed some real treats. We had good weather for all of them and hosts who had taken a lot of trouble to ensure that we had an informative and enjoyable time. We kicked off in May with **Bourne** where the highlight was Steve Guillari's transformation in our minds of the intriguing bumps in the parkland of Wellhead Gardens. They became moats, castle walls, a drawbridge and Civil War structures of a place of considerable historic importance. Then for refreshments in the Museum and our thanks to its curators, Brenda and Jim Jones.

Next came **Kings Cliffe** in June with our host Sue Trow-Smith of Kings Cliffe Heritage. It was our fourth organised visit to the village since our founding and never ceases to impress. The enthusiasm of its volunteers to communicate its many stories is outstanding. Even down to blue mini-discs in windows to say who was living there at the time of the 1911 census! An introduction and walk with Sue was followed by excellent refreshments in the church.



Lastly, **Crowland** in July. Again, we had a generous reception; an introductory talk about St Guthlac by David Searle, guides for three groups round the Abbey and a walking tour from Abbey to Triangular Bridge led by Stephen Perry with his accompanying illustrated booklet. Who would have thought that there was a link between Crowland Abbey and Halley's comet? - more detail in our annual report! Again, generous refreshments at the Abbey to finish another thoroughly enjoyable afternoon visit.

Peter Lee

SUMMER IN PETERBOROUGH



We in the Civic Society like to keep an eye on the city centre and how it can remain attractive for residents and visitors alike. Recently one of the city's clocks appears to have lost its hands (Town Hall clock above left) and another appears to have disappeared completely (D'Arcy's, Westgate, left). We hope that they will soon both be fully restored.



These Listed gates on Milton Ferry Bridge (right) turned out to be the responsibility of the City Council as Highway Authority. Following some pressure from Castor Parish Council, your Society and the Council's Conservation Officer, a thorough renovation job has been carried out. (The hoop at the bottom of the gate is for hounds).



During summer 2023 a great deal has happened in and around Peterborough. In particular major developments are under way, notably on the old Market site, Northminster (see photo below) and Fletton Quays continues to grow.



On 24 June the Peterborough Pride event occurred in the city centre (above). This was a bright, joyful occasion, further enhanced when revellers combined with Cathedral wedding guests for a joint photo call.



Pride revellers walk through the Cathedral gateway (right)



Over the summer further examples of street art have appeared in the city including under Soke Parkway near the rowing course, Bright Street link road and the toilet block on the Embankment (left).