

The Lymington Voice

The Newsletter of the Lymington Society Autumn 2011

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Chairman's Comments

For each newsletter following the AGM, our Editor asks for the copy of my AGM report. As it is always printed it is easy copy and fills up the Newsletter nicely for those of you who might not have been at the AGM, but no doubt at the expense of repetition for those who were there. However I commend the 2011 AGM report to you (*it's on page 2 - ed*) because it does give a review of where we have come in the last 10 years and the arguments we have been engaged in, and those in which, on behalf of



**Society Chairman
Clive Sutton**

the Town, we believe we have succeeded, and those

which on behalf of the Town, we have not been so successful, and the results of which are plain for all to see.

Redrow

In the AGM report I said that the Lymington Society was not a campaigning group and this distinguishes it from several other groups in the town and, I hope, gives it a special place of responsibility. This is particularly so concerning the Society's relationship with the

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Redrow Latest

By Clive Sutton

You have now no doubt all seen the photograph of what part of the Redrow site will look like in the presentation in the local paper. This is a view of the end of two long lines of buildings with wavy walls starting at the existing entrance and running parallel to the railway line down to the river near the bridge.

On the railway side of those buildings will be two levels of largely covered car parking and another block of dwellings opening out onto a raised terrace with pedestrian access across the railway. The individual houses of which there will be about 12, will fill the area of the curve of the river. The whole

development will be set well back from the river and quite well screened by trees.

At this stage I have been able to go to working party meetings with the architects and developers to discuss how the development should proceed. The height has not been a major problem, but a major problem was the facade of the two lines of buildings which the architect Bryan Avery has bravely proposed should be in a semicircular style which to some extent reflects the bays of other classical seaside terraces.

It is never right to second-guess the concept of an architect. He must be given a brief and allowed to develop

it and, as we have seen from previous designs, once several people have had their input then the plan starts to look as if they have been designed by committee. At the moment the scheme is very much the architect's concept and Redrow themselves are very excited by it, although it may be somewhat expensive to build.

As I said in my letter to the paper I really do hope that the Lymington Society with the support of the Town, by its continued interest in the site, and in particular the public meeting in April, has concentrated everyone's minds on the fact that this development must relate to the Town and provide a sense

of community. At the same time it must be of the highest architectural standards and I believe that so far it is giving that impression.

Members of the Society had a chance to see Bryan's designs at the social meeting on Nov 8th and greeted them very positively. The imaginative use of detail from the Lymington area, including the crinkle-crankle walls, and the provision of open space for residents and the community, were welcomed.

We cannot do more and we now have to await the final result which looks as if it will not be fully revealed for another three years or so.

Editor's Note

We were almost set to go with this newsletter more than a month ago, and all sorts of things started to happen: The Wightlink public

enquiry, the Wetherspoons second application, and the Redrow new architectural design all came along. These events not only kept your

committee extremely busy, but have made some of the contents of some newsletter articles obsolete. Apologies for this. We have updated where we can, but feel it is

best to get you an imperfect newsletter than to wait for events to unfold completely. Please forgive the occasional anachronism and contradiction.

Chairman's AGM Address

From Clive Sutton

Ladies and gentlemen,

I well remember my father as a parish priest scratching his head for a theme for his sermon. I do the same in a secular way every year for the Lymington Society Annual General Meeting. This year I received a call yesterday afternoon from a helpful committee member, which reminded me of the AGM today. At the time I was in the process of clearing out an enormous amount of excess papers and in my hand were Lymington Society papers going back 10 years which reminded me that I had been asked to become Chairman in May 2001.

Many of you will remember the previous Acting Chairman Leslie Dry, who in asking for new committee members in his Acting Chairman's report for March 2001 said: "It is essential if the Association is to continue, to find new officers for the coming Annual General Meeting and I would urge members to offer themselves for committee service since the Lymington Society is really the only forum to defend the Town against the overwhelming pressures of development".

How right he was and I hope you agree that that is what the Society has done in the intervening 10 years.

In my first report to the members in October 2001, I said: "I would like to see the Society being not only reactive to proposals but also constructive and, where appropriate, supportive of the council's planning policies. If however, we feel the policies, or individual applications, are wrong, we will be vociferous in opposing them".

In the next paragraph I said: "One of the major current planning it is the future of the Webb Site. This is something on which I think and I believe the Society and its membership can have an important voice".

Enough of quoting from the past, but I think it is interesting to go back every now and then to see where one started from and see what has been achieved in the light of that. Here are a few milestones from the past 10 years.

There was the Society's contribution to the 2001 Supplemental Planning

Guidance on the Webb Site, sadly largely ignored by the granting of the original Webb Site planning permission by the then councillors.

There was the first public meeting by the then developers, Paxtons, explaining their proposals, at which Paxtons said that, if they had been encouraged to meet the Society and its membership before developing their plans, they would have taken into account numerous of the points made by the members and the public at that meeting.

There was the start of planning applications for flats in our residential roads. These lead to another public meeting at which the planning officers and councillors were present, and which started a sea change in their thinking. The situation has been like stopping a super tanker, and I think we are now beginning to see official opposition to further flat developments in residential roads, but I'm afraid not without some significant change to the character of those roads having taken place. Change which has not inevitably and irrevocably changed Lymington's character, but which could have done if loud opposition had not been voiced initially.

There have been issues over the ferries in which I hope the Society, in holding a public meeting, laid the ground for a level playing field preventing Wightlink from getting away entirely with a fait-accompli, and in respect of which the debate still continues.

Coming more up-to-date: in the last year, there has been the recent cooperation with the council officers over Local Distinctiveness, where the efforts put in by our committee members have led to the character of the town being reflected in the Local Distinctiveness Guidance, which will now inform planning decisions, and planning inspectors who come to review those decisions.

Even more up-to-date, and there has been the part played by the Society in the issue over Wetherspoons and the wholehearted opposition by the community to a "destination" public house immediately adjacent to our parish church and churchyard. Our efforts, with others, led to a unanimous vote by

councillors against this, and our efforts will have to be renewed again for the inevitable new application, lodged in these cases in the hope that our opposition will be worn down by having to go through the whole process again.

Through all these issues I have tried to encourage the committee members to be objective, and they have responded. We are not a campaign group. There are other such groups, for example the groups set up to oppose the Redrow development and the Lymington River Users Group set up to oppose the ferries. Our objective is to ensure that the planning process works fairly and, where we do not feel the right decision is being made, to oppose that decision; and not only to oppose that decision but to encourage the right decision to be made.

An example of this is the Wellworthy Club site, where we encouraged a better effort by the developers, which they responded to with an Art Deco development, but which unfortunately was just too much for the site. We hope that the third proposal now being built will reflect the character of that site.

I can't say that the development at the traffic lights has been one of our best successes but at least one can say that the building merges into the remainder of Southampton Road to the north without being able to set a precedent for further similar redevelopment up Southampton Road. We wait to see the results of Colton's redevelopment opposite, having said goodbye to the old landmark of Buckland House.

That leads back to the thorny subject of the Webb's chicken factory site exactly 10 years on. I would like to encourage everyone now to call it the Redrow site, at least in recognition of the effort which that company have put into trying to improve on the original Paxton's planning permission. I said earlier how Paxton told us that, if the powers that be had not kept the Society apart from them as developers, then a lot of the issues raised could have been taken account of in the original plans.

Council policy has changed dramatically since then, and we have been involved

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Your Committee Members

In the finest journalistic tradition, page 3 of your Newsletter has intimate insights into the lives of your Committee Members. In this edition: Nigel Seth-Smith, webmaster and newsletter editor, and new committee member Tim Kermodé .

Nigel Seth-Smith



Nigel arrived in Lymington in 2002, fresh from Petersfield, and before that London, Southampton, Alresford and Toronto, Canada.

He's an electronic engineer by profession, working in the exotic world of broadcast television. The miracle of the internet allows him to work for a company based near Toronto, from his home in Lymington.

In Toronto, Nigel lived in an area of 1950s bungalows that were one-by-one being bought up and replaced by "monster homes", vast Italianate monstrosities which virtually filled their plots. This experience, together with his rapidly formed love of Lymington, led him to join the Society's committee in 2005. Since then he has served as social secretary and is now editor for the website and this very newsletter you hold in your hands. He is also the projectionist for the Lymington Film Society. Films once a month on Sunday evenings at the community centre. Please join!

Nigel is married to Sally Johnston, a GP at the Chawton House practice. Between them they have five children to their names, although all are now just about earning. Yippee.

Since moving to Lymington Nigel has, of course, become a bit of a sailor. Starting any activity late in life, and particularly one as complex as sailing, is unlikely to lead to greatness, but Nigel enjoys the Thursday evening races at the Yacht club, and is starting to feel as if he's getting the hang of it.

He also drags the family off annually for a sail around the Med courtesy of Sunsail.

Tim Kermodé



Tim was brought up in Northern Hampshire and lived in Kent and Sussex before coming to Lymington in 1995.

Tim is a Chartered Civil Engineer and worked in the Water and Environmental industries for 35 years, recently as the Coastal Engineer for Hampshire and the IOW. He has recently retired but has a small consultancy and a professional interest as Chairman of the local Institution of Civil Engineers Maritime Group.

Having known Lymington for some time (He can remember his father paying the toll on the toll-bridge on the way to the IOW ferry!) and a knowledge of planning and environmental legislation and of coastal processes he will be able to help the society with its aims.

Tim strongly believes in sustainable development (ie development that meets the needs of this generation without prejudicing the needs of future generations) and thinks Lymington is in need of good modern development to complement the existing Georgian town.

Its unique position "twixt the Forest and the Sea" means that the town should continue to be a bridge between the rural surroundings and the more urban economic community. Sufficient industry and affordable housing is also important to ensure that the town survives.

Tim and his wife, Annabel live within the Buckland Conservation area. They have two grown up children, both of whom were educated at Priestlands and Brockenhurst college and now have moved away to follow their careers.

Wightlink Ferries Public Enquiry

By Donald Mackenzie

Local Organisations Left to Face Wightlink Lawyers at Public Inquiry after Dramatic Last-Minute Deal between Wightlink and the Regulators

A last-minute agreement between Wightlink and Natural England, virtually on the steps of the Council Chamber in Lymington, led the NFDC, the National Park Authority and Natural England to abandon their previous objections to the Wightlink Planning Applications at the Public Inquiry held in Lymington in mid-October.

Following 21 months of negotiation between Wightlink and Natural England, a controversial agreement was finally hammered out, which Natural England claim would be sufficient to fully "mitigate" or offset the harmful effects which Natural England had forecast that the ferries would cause.

The shock withdrawal of both local authorities and Natural England, on the day before the Public Inquiry started, left only local organisations - including the Lymington River Association and the Lymington Society - "holding the ring" against the combined might of Wightlink's two QCs and numerous environmental and other consultants.

Wightlink's lawyers made clear on the first day of the Inquiry that they meant business by demanding to see all of the Lymington Society Committee's minutes for the last four years, together with the minutes of the Society's AGMs

The Public Inquiry proper began on Tuesday the 11th of October with the various parties to the Inquiry, including the Lymington Society, reading out their "Opening Statements"

In ours the Society set out the various important concerns raised since the unlawful introduction of the W Class vessels in 2009, which include:

- The potentially large impact on the natural beauty of the Lymington River Estuary caused by W Class vessels through the loss of the salt marshes in the upper reaches of the river.
- The uncertainty that the controversial mud dumping "mitigation" scheme in

the outer Solent would be sufficient to fully "mitigate" the harmful effects of the operation of the W Class ferries in the Lymington River.

- The effects of greatly increased HGV traffic, especially at night, on local residents near to the terminal but also throughout the New Forest.

On Friday, October 14th it was the Society's turn to give evidence and both Chairman Clive Sutton and Committee Member Don Mackenzie gave evidence on behalf of the Society.

The overall position of the Society was that Wightlink's new "mitigation" proposals, whilst an improvement on Wightlink's previous refusal to countenance any restrictions on their service, did not go far enough to reassure the Society that the natural beauty of the Lymington River would not be harmed by the operation of these very large new vessels.

Dumping of mud on salt marshes in the outer Solent in exchange for loss of saltmarsh in the Lymington River might satisfy Natural England's requirement for nature conservation purposes but it would still leave Lymington losing much of the natural beauty which makes the Lymington River so special and caused it to be designated as one of only 30 "Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty" in the country

Those not conversant with the workings of a Public Inquiry would almost certainly be astonished at the aggressive and intrusive questioning to which the Wightlink lawyers subjected any witnesses giving evidence against the Wightlink Planning Applications.

This truly was a battle of wits worthy of any court room drama with reputations at stake and no quarter given in the lawyer's attempts to undermine either the evidence from local objectors or their position and standing in the community.

As expected Wightlink had forensically detected the Committee's Minutes looking for signs of discord between Committee Members or any other issue which they could use to undermine the standing of the Society or the position which they had taken.

Mr. Sutton was first to bat for the Society and strongly defended the decision-making process of the Committee as well as the right of the Society to bring the concerns of local people to the Public Inquiry.

Next to give evidence was Committee Member Donald Mackenzie who gave evidence on behalf of the Society's position concerning planning issues related to loss of visual amenity of the river if the salt marshes were damaged, the traffic issues concerning greatly increased numbers of HGV vehicles especially at night, the visual impact of the huge ferries on residents near the terminal (especially at high tide) and the impact of extremely loud Tannoy announcements which can be heard over a very wide area.

Scientific issues including the lack of proper scientific investigations undertaken by either Wightlink or Natural England and the likelihood that the controversial mud dumping "mitigation" scheme was likely to fail were also set out.

Cross examination of Mr. Mackenzie by a Wightlink QC then continued for approximately 2 1/2 hours with robust exchanges on both sides. Members can be sure that both Mr. Sutton and Mr. Mackenzie gave as good as they got and stoutly defended the right of local amenity organisations, such as the Lymington Society, to bring valid concerns to the Public Inquiry especially in the light of the sudden withdrawal of objections by both Natural England and the local planning authorities .

At all times the Inspector Mary O'Rourke was extremely helpful and courteous to local objectors, many of whom had little experience in the legal niceties and protocols of such a formal legal process and who relied heavily on the Inspector to help them put their case effectively.

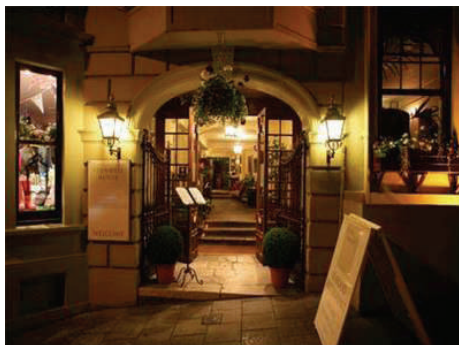
They can be little doubt however that local organisations, unable to afford proper legal representation due to the huge cost, were at a significant disadvantage against the top flight legal and experienced team of expert witnesses assembled by Wightlink.

The Inspector will report our findings by December 2nd and the Society along with everyone else, awaits the findings with interest.

Lymington Society Social Programme 2011 - 2012

Christmas Drinks - Stanwell House Hotel.

6.00 – 8.00 pm. Tuesday the 13th of Dec 2011



Stanwell House Hotel

The third Social Meeting of the year will be the Christmas Drink Party held as before at the Stanwell House Hotel in Lymington High Street. This year it is on the 13th of December from 6 p.m. -- 8 p.m. As usual Stanwell House will be serving their wonderful high quality canapés as well as a choice of wines, soft drinks etc. The Committee looks forward to meeting as many members as possible and engaging in discussion about any issues that members might wish to discuss. A lot has happened this year, and particularly in the last few weeks, so please come along and catch up.

Please feel free to bring friends as guests to help make this a really sparkling occasion helping us all to get into the festive mood.

Cost is £7.50 to include refreshments. Limited numbers of tickets also available on the Door

To Purchase Tickets for Social Events, Please Contact:

**Solent House Dental Surgery,
Cannon Street, Lymington.**

01590 672986

From Parlour Maid to Peer - Life on the Country Estates

Illustrated Talk By Sarah Newman - St Barbe Museum

6.00 pm—8.00 pm. Tuesday the 7th of February 2012.



Pylewell House circa 1830

For centuries the country houses and estates played a central role in the social, political and economic life of the countryside. This area had its grand houses, such as Pylewell, Walhampton and Newlands, which attracted royal visitors, and more modest homes where there was a constant struggle to keep up appearances.

The army of domestic servants and estate workers needed to service these houses provided employment for many local people. Owners played major roles in shaping the locality, some were players on the national stage: the Marchioness of Hastings who lived at Efford Park was a pioneer fossil hunter in the early 19th century, Auberon Herbert of Ashley Arnewood was a radical MP, while Sir Harry Burrard Neale became a national hero and friend of George III.

Entry £5.00 to include refreshments.

Please see our website for the latest on recent and upcoming events:

www.lymsoc.co.uk/Events.htm

Lymington Society AGM, The Lymington Community Centre

7.00 pm—9.30 pm Tues 20th Mar 2012

The Lymington Society AGM is the main business meeting of the year when Members get a change to stand for the Committee or nominate fellow members to the Committee. Election of officers takes place for the year ahead and following a report from the Chairman on the Society's activities in the year; current important issues are debated and discussed.

To lighten the necessarily serious nature of an AGM the second half of this meeting usually consists of a talk by a local speaker on a topic of note which the Committee hopes members will find interesting. TALK TO BE ARRANGED

No charge for this meeting. Refreshments from 7.00pm.

Meeting starts at 7.30pm

Summer Garden Party

6.00 pm – 8.00 pm. Tuesday the 19th of June 2012

Garden of Chawton House Surgery St Thomas Street



Chawton House Garden

As a change from our previous venues at East Grove and Buckland Manor, this year's Garden Party will take place at the charming gardens behind the imposing St Thomas Street premises of Chawton House Medical Practice in Lymington. Courtesy of Dr Sally Johnston and her Partners, we will be able to enjoy another of the wonderful gardens to be found hidden in the heart of Lymington

Tickets £7.50 to include refreshments/drinks etc.

Planning—The Last Year

By Jonathan Hutchinson and Nic King

The twelve months to mid-August 2011 have seen 255 planning applications in the town; an increase of 9.9% over the equivalent preceding period.

However, the numbers do not necessarily convey any clear message, because applications vary so widely in scale and scope. For example, there has been a welcome reduction in the number of proposals for large-scale redevelopment, probably as a consequence of economic circumstance.

Householder Developments

Just over half the year's applications were classified as "householder developments", a term which embraces the aspirations of residents and freeholders generally, which are part of the slow and natural process of evolution and renewal of the town. We very rarely comment on or object to such proposals. 33 applications concerned alterations to listed buildings or sought demolition of unlisted buildings in the town centre conservation area. We objected to two of the former and one was refused.

Minor Dwellings

The next biggest group was "Minor Dwellings", which covers everything from variation of planning conditions imposed on earlier consents to small new developments. In that group we entered five objections; four of those applications were refused and one withdrawn.

One example is **7-9 Belmore Lane** (Appeal APP/B1740/A/10/2143045). We submitted an objection to the Planning Inspector as we considered that demolition of the existing property would be a significant loss of a 'non-designated heritage asset', in that it is one of the few remaining traces of Lymington's development during this important era. The property is within a zone defined in the Conservation Area Appraisal, which includes "Queen Street, Priestlands Place and the upper end of Belmore Lane" where "New development, which introduces significant elements of building of a scale or intensity out of keeping with that of the original, extant pattern of

building in that particular zone of the conservation area, should be avoided".

The Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal, saying "there are too many aspects of the scheme that do not altogether preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area".

Advertisements

Of the applications in other categories, an important group from the Society's point of view was that of Advertisements. The planning rules governing advertisements, particularly those in the Conservation Area, are comprehensive and clear; but they are not always understood or followed by retailers or developers.

There were sixteen advertisement applications during the period, thirteen of them covering premises in the Town Centre Conservation Area and several of them retrospective. Eleven were granted, three refused and two are still in public consultation.

In most cases the planners showed themselves to be alive to the problem of "rogue" advertisements, but there have been some cases in which enforcement appears to have been slow or ineffective.

We lodged one objection to a retrospective application (96593/Prezzo) which had already been refused once and dismissed at appeal. That case was refused but is currently under a further appeal.

Notifications

"notifications" is a rare category, which included two unusual applications by Vodaphone to erect mobile phone masts in the town. These brought an unusually high number of objections (99 in all) and both were refused.

Major Developments

Three planning matters have dominated our lives for most of the past year: the Bridge Road site often referred to as "Redrow" or "Former Chicken Factory", the ferries, and the proposed change of use of the premises at 47-48 St Thomas Street (Ford's furniture shop) from retail use to that of a drinking establishment. The first two of these are covered elsewhere in this newsletter in the

contributions of the Chairman and Donald McKenzie.

47-48 St Thomas St

It is important to be clear that application 95473 and its successor 96974 should like any other planning applications have been judged by their planning merits and not the merits of the applicants (in this case the national chain J D Wetherspoon), although many in the press and elsewhere have chosen to portray them in the latter light. The question in both cases was whether the premises at 47-48 St Thomas Street satisfied the principles governing Change of Use Classification set out in planning policy. (We now know it would be a very large pub and cafe, to be open up to 18 hours a day, seven days a week and aiming to undercut its High Street competitors in the pricing of alcohol). When it refused the first application unanimously in September 2010 the Development Control Committee (which at that time was unaware of the intended opening hours or of the scale of business proposed) made clear that the site's proposed new use was incompatible with those of its long-established neighbours, the Church and Monmouth House care home. It is also clear that a very large body of local opinion supports that view. In the ten years or so for which we have internet records, just eight other planning applications have drawn more than ten objections and only three more than 100 - while these two have together precipitated 1,110. The Society sought to articulate these many concerns in its own objections, and attended the decision meeting on 14th September to speak against the latest application, which offers a few small palliative concessions on opening hours and unenforceable assurances on other concerns, but can not alter the overriding fact of the site's location. The outcome was extraordinary. After a discussion which centred irrelevantly on the claimed reputation and standing of the applicants while largely ignoring the change of use question set by the application, and in spite of the unanimous objections of its Lymington

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Planning

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members, backed up by the Town Council planning sub-committee's unanimous recommendation that the application should be refused, and without even mentioning the 923 objections lodged against it during the consultation stage, the Development Control Committee voted by 13 to 6 to approve the application which a year earlier it had unanimously refused. One of its members led the discussion by claiming to have visited Monmouth House and found that "many" of the residents were in favour - something that they have since explicitly denied in writing to the NFDC's Chief Executive, reaffirming their unanimous opposition. (That Councillor's website, under the heading "who I am", claims the following: *My Council. ethos is: - "Listen to the people - Act for the people. Who I am, what I am matters not - what does matter is my promise to act and work for the people."*) There was no discussion of the Officers' recommendations, or of the overwhelmingly hostile views of our town. The Chairman did not explore the differing opinions expressed, or sum them up before moving to a vote.

The decision was so contrary to the planning facts and the feelings expressed by those who live here, and the manner of reaching it so bizarre, that your Committee has decided to seek a legal Opinion as to whether there are grounds for a Judicial Review. If any members would like to support such a move, please get in touch with any Committee member - contact details may be found elsewhere on this website.

Enforcement

One other aspect of the year's planning history deserves mention. There have been two cases in which applications have been refused but built anyway, then refused retrospectively - but not enforced. One has since been allowed at appeal, partly on grounds of neglect by the enforcers over a long period to follow words with action. While such cases are rare, they are a worrying sign of an enforcement regime falling down on the job, which could undermine the best intentions of the planning process.

Chairman's AGM Address

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with Redrow in their proposals. However, unfortunately, in trying to do something better Redrow engaged an architect who told me quite frankly that he only designed in square blocks. If only they had run that one past the Society before going ahead! Having realised their mistake, Redrow very fairly carried out a consultation which led to a final application with pitched roofs in a very individualistic style, which, however sympathetic one tries to be, just does not look as if it should be located in Lymington.

I go back to my first quotation: "If, however, we feel the policies or individual applications are wrong, we will be vociferous in opposing them". We have every sympathy for Redrow's efforts but the end result has to be right for Lymington. With that in mind we think the right way forward is to call another public meeting to be held on 4 April for everyone's views to be aired and we will be inviting Redrow and councillors and planning officers to that meeting. Don Mackenzie will be giving you more of the background details of the applications as a preliminary to that meeting.

(The public meeting referred to here did indeed take place, and is referred to elsewhere in the newsletter- ed)

Of the 10th anniversary of the new committee of the Society can I again record the efforts of those who do so much on a daily basis and on whom I can entirely rely to carry out their duties.

Peter Chitty, our President and wise head. It's not what he says, but what he doesn't say, that I rely on.

Ivor Johnston, our Secretary keeping the paperwork and the correspondence in order and hosting our monthly meetings.

Don Mackenzie, our press officer who fires us up when necessary.

Nic King, who has dealt with the planning for so long.

Jonathan Hutchinson, who has recently put in so much detailed effort on the planning side and makes a fantastic team with Nic King.

Derek Sheffer, who manages the

accounts and the subscriptions and membership so quietly and efficiently.

Nigel Seth-Smith, who manages the website and edits the newsletter to a form where my office photocopier produces it at the touch of a button.

I am very thankful not to be in the position of Leslie Dry 10 years ago who indicated that without fresh blood in the committee the Society was at risk of being able to continue. We may need changes and fresh blood in the future but at the moment this committee is firing on all cylinders and reacting to every challenge. I hope you will continue to give it your support.

Chairman's Comments

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former Webb Site, now, more appropriately, the Redrow Site. We started our involvement by contributing to the Supplemental Planning Guidance 10 years ago. Unfortunately this was a fairly pointless exercise, as it was largely ignored by the then councillors who went on to pass a 300 unit development.

After numerous discussions, arguments and planning appeals over the intervening years, we felt at the start of 2011 that it was time for another public meeting, which I referred to in my AGM address. I think that public meeting, and the decision by Redrow immediately preceding it, marked the high point in the Society's efforts over the last 10 years. Redrow executives came round to the view that they would reduce the number of units on the site dramatically. The public meeting was arranged and went ahead, but in a more constructive manner than if the public meeting had had to persuade Redrow to move away from the original density.

Needless to say the public meeting was again a "full house" for the community centre Hall.

In that meeting I called for Redrow to agree that in "going back to the drawing board" they would involve the local community in drawing up the new plans before submission for planning consent. In doing so they asked for recommendations of architects, and found three architects to present them with designs. One of these was Bryan Avery, an architect born in Lymington,

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Chairman's Comments

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but with now national status, who has liaised with the Lymington Society over several previous matters, particularly the design, some years ago, of a bridge to link the site to the Town Quay. His design has been accepted by Redrow with enthusiasm as being one which we all hope will not just be another housing estate or residential development, but will be a "destination" in itself.

The design, for those of you who have not seen any preliminary sketches is based on two lines of buildings running from the entrance, parallel to the railway, and opening onto the river at the southern end. The larger more expensive houses will be on the curve of the river on the eastern side. There will be tiered car parking on the railway side. It is reflective of Bucklers Hard and the communal area between the two lines of houses.

The committee has a representative on the working party set up by Redrow to advise them, and there have already been two meetings guiding and warning Redrow as to potential reactions to the various aspects of the design. They have agreed to incorporate a community use building and access to the water, which will hopefully introduce activity on the site so that people want to go there to use it, as well as giving the fullest possible enjoyment to the residents.

I hope, if this scheme comes off in a way which does credit to Lymington, it will have proved the importance of a constructive dialogue on preliminary designs between developers and the local community, as well as the more formal planning consultations with the Council and its officers.

Wetherspoons

Whilst the Redrow site has dominated our activities since the AGM, other matters continue and we have put in a further substantial response to the next Wetherspoon's application. This has now reached an unprecedented level of individual representations of about 800 as opposed to the previous record of about 150 for the first application.

Ferries

The ongoing issue of the Wightlink ferries looks as if it is going to lead to a public enquiry shortly. The Society's committee does not think this is

something where we should spend Society money for representation, but is currently considering its approach to the enquiry, which will be to point out, as objectively as possible, factors which will either benefit or prejudice the local environment by the use of the ferries. We are lucky to have been able to welcome onto the committee Tim Kermode who was formerly employed by the Environment Agency and has a good technical knowledge of the issues regarding the river.

Planning

The complexion of the Town Council has changed recently and the Committee are hoping to meet some of the new Town Councillors soon on a formal basis to ensure that that relationship continues as a partnership, in planning particularly, to benefit the town.

All in all I think we are at a new stage where the confrontations of the past 10 years in trying to persuade planners and developers to preserve the character of Lymington, in the light of government guidelines for dense development has now merged into a more easy relationship of cooperation where we can cooperate to make the best of prominent individual sites.

With the new legislation coming along as to the presumption of development particularly in relation to Greenfield sites, the battle lines will no doubt move themselves the countryside of which there is still a considerable amount in the Lymington area and which the Society will be keen to protect.

Membership

New members always welcome.

Membership costs £10.00 per member. Application forms are available to print from our Web Site www.lymsoc.co.uk or from Derek Sheffer at the address below.

Please send Completed Membership to:

Derek Sheffer

Lymington Soc. Membership Sec.

Lorne Cottage,

Navarino Court,

Lymington, SO41 9AE

Recent Social Meetings

Sven Berlin (1911 - 1999) - A Centenary Celebration



Lymington Society members enjoyed a private viewing of the Sven Berlin exhibition at the St Barbe museum. Thanks as ever to Steven Marshall for a fascinating talk about the artist.

Bryan Avery—The Influence of the New Forest on his Work, and What Next For the Redrow Site



Bryan Avery, who was brought up in Lymington, is the architect chosen by Redrow - at the suggestion of the Society - to take up the challenge of producing a new scheme for the old "chicken factory" site in Lymington.

An award winning architect with major schemes in the UK and abroad in his credit, Bryan has also recently published a book on his architectural philosophy which he says leans heavily on his upbringing in Lymington and the New Forest.

Buildings of his that you might know include the IMAX building at Waterloo and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) building in Gower Street.