



The Heswall Society

*Established for the public benefit to
conserve the heritage of Heswall*

www.theheswallsociety.org.uk

NEWS LETTER

AUTUMN 2020

CHANGES TO 2020 MEETINGS

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus situation will members please note the following changes to the Society's schedule of meetings for this year:-

Cancellation:

The Society's open meeting scheduled to be held on Monday, September 23 has been cancelled.

Change:

The Society's open meeting scheduled to be held on Monday, November 11 has been cancelled and replaced by a short AGM meeting, to be carried out virtually using Zoom video-conferencing.

Further information about the AGM and joining details will be forwarded to members by email nearer the time. If you wish to join us for the AGM and are on email then please opt to receive our communications by email by emailing me at chairman@heswallsociety.org.uk. This has the added benefit of allowing us to keep you more easily up to date with developments and also save the Society's resources.

Your Committee will continue to monitor the situation carefully. The intention is to resume our scheduled face-to-face open meetings in January next year, but this very much depends upon how the Covid-19 situation develops over the coming winter months.

Meeting dates may have to be changed. Please refer to our website www.theheswallsociety.org.uk or phone Annabel, our events secretary, on 0151 342 7102

These changes, forced on us by the current Covid-19 situation, are very unfortunate but I hope that you will appreciate that they have been taken with members' safety and comfort being the prime consideration.

Dr Steve Anderson – Chairman, Heswall Society

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

What a difficult period since our last Newsletter! I had hoped that winter 2019 and spring/summer 2020 would prove a little less frenetic than the time leading up to our last Newsletter. How wrong could I have been! Not only did the anticipated hiatus in the evolving Local Plan not materialise, but we also have had to contend with the Covid-19 situation and the evolving 'new normal'.



Despite the lockdown, you will see that the Society has been busy!

I hope members and their families have not been badly affected by this pandemic. I am pleased to report that your Committee keeps well and has managed to keep up with monthly meetings, albeit not face-to-face but through the use of video-conferencing (Skype).



It is interesting how this pandemic has highlighted what is truly important in life – family and friends. This pandemic has also focused attention on the importance of NHS staff, care workers, shop workers, lorry drivers etc, our key workers, underlining their critical value to the community.

It has been a shame to see most of the shops in Heswall having to close during this period with only those few classified as essential remaining open. It is a real concern that some of our more individual shops will be struggling to survive. On a more positive note, it has been inspirational to see how different groups have got together to support the more vulnerable in the community. I really hope that we can build on this community spirit as we move forward.

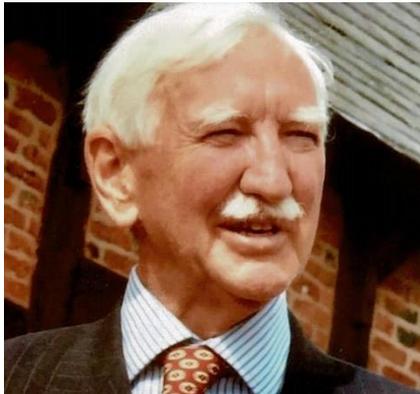
Although a number of activities have necessarily had to be curtailed because of the measures imposed by the pandemic, as mentioned above, we have still been kept busy.

Finally, as you may have gathered a lot has been going on and the Society has been trying to keep members up-to-date with key developments, particularly about consultations, using members email. I would encourage those of you who use email but have not yet opted to receive the Society's communications by email to do so. Just email me chairman@heswallsociety.org.uk saying that you wish to switch to email communication. This allows us to keep you more easily up-to-date with developments while also saving us both time and money.

Equally, it is important to inform us if you change your email address.

Steve Anderson

STUART MARSDEN



In May this year we were sad to learn of the death of Stuart Marsden, a past Society chairman. Stuart made an enormous contribution to the Heswall Society during his 32 years on the Committee serving the last 10 years as chairman. Stuart was a true gentleman and was a hugely influential Chairman. He will be greatly missed by those who had the privilege to know him. Our obituary to Stuart can be found via the home page on our website.

OUR COMMITTEE

We are delighted that two of our members have shown an interest in joining the Committee. They have still to sit in on a couple of Committee meetings (if only by Zoom!) before finally committing themselves. We are looking forward to doing so face-to-face in the not too distant future. This does not mean that we are not still looking for more people to take over from those on the Committee who have been doing their roles for many years and who will wish to step down sometime in the near future.

In addition, however, as was mentioned in the last Newsletter, Dr Steve Anderson (pictured) would like to step down as Chairman at the next AGM. As yet, nobody has come forward to take over the role. It is vital for the health and viability of the Society that these roles, including Chairmanship, are being periodically refreshed. Unless this happens the future of the Society becomes questionable. Please consider joining the Committee.



LOCAL PLAN



The Council released for consultation the next draft Local Plan in January entitled 'Issues and Options Proposals'. This was a large document and a small Task Force was formed to compose the Society's response. Our detailed submission was copied to members before the deadline for

submissions and members encouraged to submit their own response. Some key points in our response were that:

- Housing need estimate of 12,000 is 3-4 times what it should be.
- More Brownfield sites can and should be identified.
- There are deficiencies in discharging the Government's requirement of effective working with neighbouring Councils.
- We should challenge the definition (by ARUP) of weakly performing Green Belt sites in Heswall.

According to Wirral Globe, work is now underway by the Council to assess the comments and feedback received. A significant number of responses from residents, businesses, local groups, landowners and developers was received. These responses are now being assessed.

During discussions with the Council on the 'Issues and Options Proposals' document, it was recommended by the Council (David Ball) that we apply for registration of our key green spaces as Urban Green Space, since this would give them better protection from future development. Following discussions with the Committee and Friends Groups, our Chairman made a submission for 14 green spaces in Heswall to be re-designated as Urban Green Spaces. Included, for the first time, was the triangle at Boundary Lane/Telegraph Road.



The Society also took the opportunity to offer to work with the Council Planners to develop Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) using Heswall as the pilot area. A suitably written SPD is seen as a way of tackling the proliferation of applications to build properties, including flats, in Heswall that, in our view, are neither of a suitable design or in a suitable location.

The Council have also had a number of other consultations recently, namely:

The Council appointed LUC (Land Use Consultants) to prepare a Green & Blue Infrastructure (GBI) strategy to inform the developing Local Plan. As part of this work, LUC conducted an online survey which members on e-mail were alerted to and to which the Society responded.

The Council updated four evidence-based documents as input in support of Wirral's emerging Local Plan and put them out for a six week consultation period ending on 24 July 2020.

The documents were:

[ECC1.8 - Agricultural Economy and Land Study Addendum](#)

[ECC5.6 - Wirral Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Addendum](#)

[ECC15 - Wirral Local Landscape Designations Review and Recommendation 2020](#)

[H6 - Exploring The Computation of Housing Need in Wirral 2020](#)

The Heswall Society once again put together a small Task Force to compile responses to all but the first one (ECC1.8).

The Society made a strong argument against the conclusion in the Housing Need document (H6) that Wirral does not have *exceptional circumstances* to deviate from the figure produced by the use of the 'Standard Method'.

Our arguments were based on those put together by the Wirral Green Space Alliance, and showed why we believe the predicted 12,000 housing need figure calculated using the standard method is far too high, and that Wirral does indeed have exceptional circumstances to justify using a significantly smaller number that represents the true housing need.

In the case of the other two documents the Society only considered these in terms of that part of the landscape which lies either within or very close to the area of the Heswall Ward. For this particular part of Wirral, our view was that the documents showed a depth of understanding of the area that was appreciated.

With respect to ECC 15, the Heswall Society supports the inclusion of the area between Heswall Fields and Cottage Lane within the Local Landscape Designation (Dee Estuary LLD) so that the whole of the undeveloped coastal strip along the Dee is protected, and provides continuity with the Dee Estuary Area of Special County Value (ASCV) within Cheshire West and Chester Borough.

Members on email were alerted to these consultations and our responses made available on our website prior to the end of the consultation should members wish to consult prior to making their own responses.

We will be keeping our members updated on the Society's views on the government's consultation on changes to the current planning process and also to the 'Planning for the Future' White Paper.

HESWALL IN BLOOM



Prior to the lockdown, a bed was dug out at the land by the Catholic Church. Gordale are going to help us plan out the bed and provide the plants at a reduced cost. The intention was to plant out the bed in the spring but due to lockdown this did not happen. It will now be planted out in the autumn. The cost of this initiative has been funded from the Local Councillor's money for Heswall.

At the end of May, and following agreement with our Councillors, the Heswall Society/Heswall in Bloom team purchased and planted flowers for all the beds and planters that we are looking after, ensuring safety and social distancing was respected. The team are very grateful to our three local Councillors for providing a further grant to Heswall in Bloom from the Heswall Ward allocation. This money is being used to fund both the summer and winter planting for this year for all the beds and planters. This support has been particularly important to us as it was not felt appropriate, because of the Covid-19 situation, to ask our local shopkeepers for any contribution this year. There was a concentrated effort to keep the plants watered as they bedded in which proved extremely challenging during the prolonged dry spell and also because we needed to ensure social distancing at all times. The subsequent rain gave us a pleasant respite. We continue to look, however, for more volunteers to help us with watering and weeding.



LIVERPOOL JOHN LENNON AIRPORT (LJLA)



Earlier in the year LJLA released a consultation on airspace transition. This change is coming about from the fact that the airport will be changing from ground to GPRS satellite navigation for take-off and landing.

The Society's evaluation of this consultation indicated no real changes involving Heswall. However following a concerning email from Councillor Christina Muspratt, and concerns from three of our members, our Chairman took the opportunity to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Society, reiterating points that that he had made back in 2017 to the airport's masterplan consultation.

The main one was of noise disruption due to the concentration of flight paths over Heswall, and the fact that flights were not being spread out but were in concentrated periods some late into the night.



Our Councillors and our MP were provided with copies of our response indicating our



Alison McGovern MP

concern that the Council were not engaging sufficiently with LJLA on aircraft noise/pollution and indeed with this consultation. Alison McGovern indicated that she was aware of the proposed changes to the flight path and was currently in discussions with Liverpool John Lennon Airport over this matter. She indicated that she had several concerns with the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Airspace Change Consultation proposal and changes that she would like to see addressed. She has requested a video-conference with senior members of LJLA to discuss the changes that the proposals would

have on Wirral South. Our Chairman has offered, on behalf of the Heswall Society, to join her for any such meeting where she felt it might be helpful.

GAYTON TELEPHONE KIOSK

It has been known for some time that BT intended to remove the telephone kiosk at the Gayton roundabout. The view of the Committee was that, unlike the Lower Village example, this kiosk was in a poor condition and was not an important part of the street scene. The Society therefore took the decision that we would not seek to adopt it. We have now been informed that BT were scheduled to remove the kiosk later on in this year.



Although the Society still has no appetite to adopt this kiosk, one of our Committee is investigating whether there might be a possibility of a third party adopting it with support from the Council and ourselves and has secured a temporary stay of its removal.

HESWALL FORESHORE

Following concerns raised by a number of members, our Chairman has been in contact with Councillor Andrew Hodson regarding the Heswall foreshore which currently has many abandoned boats that have been progressively deteriorating over the years. It is a 'grot spot' that badly needs cleaning up. Andrew had inspected it with the Council's Chief Executive before lockdown and the Council will deal with it once restrictions are eased.



WHITFIELD COMMON



Local resident, Ken Hawes, has been in contact with the Society about arranging litter picks on Whitfield Common. The Society has suggested that, once lockdown is eased, he organises specific litter picking days, and considers setting up a Friends group. He is already in touch with Councillors Andrew and Kathy Hodson who have said that they are happy to help start a 'WC Friends Group' and have put the message out on social media asking anyone interested in getting involved, in whatever capacity, to initially contact: andrewhodson@wirral.gov.uk



The Society is keen to support this initiative and will help however we can. We have suggested that he tries to involve local Rotary groups and have also put him in contact with the deputy head of Heswall Primary School.

PLANNING MATTERS

This is my first planning contribution since I took over the role of your Planning Officer from Dennis Clegg in February this year. I faced a very steep learning curve, realising immediately how fortunate the Society has been to have had the services for so long of someone as knowledgeable and experienced as Dennis. Fortunately, Dennis still plays a very active role in the Planning Group and is always generous with advice and suggestions. I am very grateful to this Group for the support they have given to me, and I would like to mention Barbara Lewis in particular for the excellent work she does in downloading the details of every planning application registered in the Heswall Ward, to then enable the Group to review them and make their recommendations to the Committee. We were sorry to learn that David Bird has decided to retire from the Group and would like to thank him for his past services. We are seeking new members for the Group and I would encourage any readers with an interest in planning and helping to protect Heswall from unsuitable development to get in touch with me on 0151-342 9269 or roger.m.lane@btinternet.com .

In the six months since the Spring Newsletter was prepared your Committee has considered 70 planning applications, of which we objected to 10, and made comments on 13. We ensure our local ward councillors are kept updated on our objections and comments, and we very much appreciate the support they continue to provide.

Following a deceptively quiet period after the New Year break, there has been a strong flow of planning applications, which has not been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Heswall is seen by developers as a very profitable location to build apartment blocks, and I describe below the progress of the eight such applications active during the period of this Newsletter. The Council's planning policy (Unitary Development Plan) is hopelessly out of date and the Council cannot demonstrate an adequate supply of housing land based on its estimate of housing need. Under these circumstances, until a fully approved Local Plan which meets the

housing need is in place, the National Planning Policy Framework stipulates a presumption must be made in favour of sustainable development. The benefit of increased housing delivery through apartment blocks needs to be balanced against the harm that they may cause, and applications cannot be refused just because of non-conformance to the old UDP policies and guidelines.

This raises the bar when opposing inappropriate applications. The Chairman has described the slow progress being made towards producing Wirral's Local Plan, and even when completed, it will need to be reviewed against the legislation anticipated following the Government's recent radical White Paper on planning (see http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Briefing_White_Paper_CV_members_briefing.pdf for a summary). In the meantime, the Society will need to be very vigilant in highlighting the harm done by inappropriate applications.

Fortunately, three of the recent applications for apartment developments have failed the test of whether the increased housing provision they would provide would justify the harm they would cause to their neighbourhoods. As a consequence, they have been refused by the Council, with this refusal upheld so far on appeal by the Planning Inspector in the case of two of them, with the third's appeal in progress.

An update on all the eight apartment applications active during the period covered by this newsletter is as follows:-

1. Inchbroom, Farr Hall Road APP/19/01814, submitted 10.6.19 for nine apartments. This application was refused by the Council and this refusal was upheld by a recent appeal decision published in July.
2. 22 Farr Hall Drive APP/19/00910, submitted 18.6.19 for six apartments. An appeal against the Council's refusal is currently in progress.
3. Longacre 41 Farr Hall Drive OUT/19/01068 submitted on 11.7.2019 for six apartments. Still undecided by the Council after more than a year
4. Denecourt 37 Oldfield Drive submitted 4.12.19 for five apartments. An appeal decision published in July supported the Council's refusal. A separate application to squeeze in an additional house behind this site is still being determined (APP/20/00779, submitted 15.6.20).
5. 29 Delavor Road, OUT/20/00188 submitted 10.2.20 for six apartments and one house was withdrawn and replaced by an application for a single house (OUT/20/01010 submitted 28.7.20).

6. Lawnswood 39 Quarry Road East APP/20/00653 submitted 21.5.20 for nine apartments was approved by unanimous decision by the Council's Planning Committee. The Society's objection argument based on the old UDP guidelines on separation distances was dismissed as not being up-to-date and unable to withstand recent appeal decisions. The presence of screening by trees between the properties was also an important factor to disregard separation concerns.
7. Teviot Bank 6 Cottage Lane, APP/20/00720 submitted on 2.6.20 for nine apartments is still under decision at the time of preparation of this report. The Society has submitted a strong objection based on inappropriate design and location.
8. Ashlea Thurstaston Road APP20/00746 submitted 9.6.20 for twelve apartments is still under decision by the planning officer at the time of preparation of this report. The Society has strongly objected to this inappropriate proposal based on design, location and excessive mass.

For the Inchbroom and 22 Farr Hall Drive Society Appeal submissions, the Committee agreed to use a professional architectural and planning practice to prepare the Society's submission, in the face of very substantial and detailed professional evidence from the appellants supporting the appropriateness of their design. This practice had prepared our original successful objections to both applications at a time when my predecessor was overwhelmed with applications. We feel that the quality of their work (with a successful appeal outcome already achieved in the case of Inchbroom) justified the expense and provided us with valuable learning to apply to future objections. We cannot afford to use consultants except in exceptional circumstances, but we reserve this option for use in the future on a case by case review basis. We will also encourage financial contributions by neighbours to the cost of consultants, provided there is no conflict with the interests of the Society or restriction to our freedom of action.

Our Chairman has written to the Council's Chief Executive regarding the totally unsatisfactory situation at Cherry Cottage, Wall Rake, which lies in the Conservation Area. The Council, at the time of writing, has failed to decide on three long-outstanding applications attempting to obtain retrospective approval for major deviations from the approved plans.



Cherry Cottage today



Wall Rake of old

The Society's view is that these deviations are very harmful to the street scene and historical character of this ancient highway. Recently 140+ year old copings from the boundary wall along Wall Rake, which the granted planning approval required to be restored after completion of the build, were consigned to a skip on the site.

The appeal against the Council's refusal to allow demolition of a sandstone wall to create a parking space at Dee Cottage 2 West Grove in the Lower Village Conservation Area is still pending (APP/19/01679).

The application APP/19/01177 to build three detached houses on land behind Willowbank, 33 Oldfield Road, was raised in the last Newsletter. The plot backs onto Heswall Dales and we were concerned about its impact on this important area. The original application was made in July 2019 and we sustained our objection in the light of supplementary submissions by the applicant in September. A decision is still outstanding, well over a year after the original application.

We were pleased to see the Council reject an application from J D Wetherspoon for extended opening hours for their proposed new business on the site of the Exchange premises on the Mount. There have been many attempts to extend opening hours at this location, which the Society has objected to and they have been consistently refused (and the refusals supported on appeal), due to the potential disturbance to people who live in the nearby designated residential area.

Several applications in the Green Belt caused us concern. We objected to amended plans to build five new stables and associated buildings on the Sealooms Estate off Broad Lane (APP/19/01262), as this would be an overdevelopment of a site which has been proposed in a recent Council consultation to be upgraded to Dee Estuary Local Landscape Designation. We also objected to an application to build a chalet on a field off Gayton Farm Road (APP/20/00722) for family leisure use, as this is an unacceptable development in the Green Belt and approval would set a very dangerous precedent.

The application OUT/18/00322 submitted in 2018 for the erection of 35 dwellings on Green Belt land at Newhall Centre, Chester High Road is still to be determined. We sustained our objection to amended plans reducing the number of houses to 18, submitted in February. This is outside our area, but is an important test case for defending the Green Belt which surrounds Heswall.

Roger Lane

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Since the last Newsletter we have researched and published an article on the history of Ashfield Hall on the Chester High Road just beyond Heswall, now largely destroyed but with enough remaining to provide a tantalising memory of its past glory. During the lockdown the Heswall and District Magazine was unable to publish, but they produced an online special edition, featuring nine of our previous articles (still accessible on their website).



Lithograph of Ashfield Hall from Edward Tycross's 'The Mansions of England and Wales' published 1850.

We had more than the usual number of queries being sent through the Society's enquiry page as many people found family genealogical research to be a good way to pass their enforced time at home.



Original Sign, Heswall Maternity Home

We are always receiving questions about the Heswall Maternity Home in Oldfield Way as thousands of babies must have been born there.

We were able to help a person who was born there, but later brought up in care, to track his old family home, which was unfortunately demolished to build the Basset Hound pub in Barnston.



The Basset Hound

At least he could have a drink to celebrate his new discovery!



Kemp's Cottage looking across The Dales

We helped a descendant of the 14 children brought up by William Kemp of Kemp's Cottage on the Dales in the 1800's to investigate their family tree.

Other requests caused us to explore why boats used to be moored at the bottom of Target Road and how public money collected for soldiers returning from WW2 was spent.

We are constantly seeking new information, so if you have old photos, paintings or documents relating to Heswall and would like us to help you explore the stories behind them, please contact Roger Lane (roger.m.lane@btinternet.com, 0151-342 9269).

Roger Lane

EVENTS

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic and the imposed social isolation the Committee took the difficult decision to cancel the March open meeting and AGM with the intention of moving the AGM to later this year. Given the slow progress in reducing the effects of the virus; the somewhat volatile situation; the fact that social distancing will remain for some time yet in the absence of a vaccine; and acknowledging that many members will still be reluctant to attend a group meeting, the Committee has taken the decision, reluctantly, not to hold any further face-to-face open meetings this year. Instead, in November we aim to hold a short AGM by video-conference using 'Zoom'. We hope to be able to get our intended AGM speaker, the illusionist Peter Turner with his talk entitled 'Heads I win, tails you lose' at one of our open meetings next year.

We recognise that a short video-conference AGM will be neither attractive nor practical for some members and for this we do apologise. These are exceptional times and your Committee felt that this was the best way to satisfy the requirements of the Charity Commission to hold an annual AGM whilst maintaining the safety and comfort of the membership. For those not wishing or able to link into this meeting, take some comfort in the fact that next year's AGM will not be that far away!

For the rest of the year we will be working closely with Heswall Hall to develop meeting safety protocols that will allow us to safely start our open meetings again. Our intention now is to hold our first open face-to-face meeting in January, details of which will be posted on the website.

PUBLICITY

Full details of the Society's activities can be found on our website at www.theheswallsociety.org.uk.

MEMBERSHIP

If you are not already a member of Heswall Society and/or can think of anyone who might be interested in becoming a member, please complete and/or pass on the **Membership Application Form overleaf**. Further copies can be downloaded from our website www.theheswallsociety.org.uk.



THE HESWALL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT AID FORM

Your membership will include all the members of your family living at the same address.

I (details below) wish to become a member of THE HESWALL SOCIETY:

Reference (HS use only)

Title Surname Forename(s)

Address

..... Post Code

e-mail address.....

Please write YES in this box if you are happy to receive all further communication electronically. Otherwise information will be sent by post.

GIFT AID

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today and in the future. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the Heswall Society if you:

- * want to cancel this declaration
- * change your name or home address
- * no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

Signed Date

STANDING ORDER FORM

Reference (HS use only)

To the Manager Bank Sort Code

Address

..... Post Code

I hereby authorise and request you to debit my/our account No: the sum of £..... (Minimum Ten Pounds) and credit Barclays Bank plc, Sort Code 20-29-50 for The Heswall Society Account No: 63505251 **on RECEIPT of this order AND ON DECEMBER 1 ANNUALLY** until cancellation; and to cancel any previous standing order payable to The Society.

Name(s)

Signed Date

Please return this form to: Membership Secretary, The Heswall Society, c/o Heswall Hall, 111 Telegraph Road, Wirral CH60 0AF