



The Heswall Society

Established for the public benefit to conserve the heritage of Heswall

NEWS LETTER

SPRING 2019

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

It has been a very busy time for the Society since our last newsletter.

Responding to the Council's development of the long overdue updated Local Plan for Wirral and in particular the initial part titled Local Plan-Development Review Options. This document and the Council's consultation related to it has taken up a lot of our Planning Officer's and my time. This review has such important implications, not only for Green Belt areas in Heswall, but more generally across Wirral, that we have been trying to keep you as well informed as possible about the issues, what we as a Society are doing and how you also could respond. Members have received a number of letters/e-mails from us to keep you up to date, and we also took the unusual step of calling an Open Meeting in September to encourage you as residents to respond to the Council's consultation, providing attendees with a handout of some key facts and points that could be integrated into responses. It was very pleasing to see the number that attended and also to have our three councillors present and contributing to the discussion. As you will be aware, the Society submitted a detailed response to the Council consultation and I have received a number of messages from members complimenting the Society on our response to this document. Our MP and leaders of all four parties were copied with our response.



The Society also submitted a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) *Technical consultation on updates to national planning policy and guidance*. Of particular concern was the proposal that planning practice guidance should use the 2014 and

not updated 2016 Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures to calculate housing need using the standard method (use of these updated ONS figures significantly reduce the perceived housing need). I also wrote to our three Councillors and to the leader of the Wirral Conservatives (Ian Lewis) outlining our objection to this proposal with our reasons, and asked that they do all they could to prevent the continuing use of the outdated 2014 projections. Ian Lewis confirmed that Wirral Conservatives had responded with views very much aligned with the Society.

There is no doubt that our Green Belt across Wirral is under severe threat from development. For this reason the Society has promoted the formation of the Wirral Green Space Alliance (WGSA) where representatives from a number of interested organisations, including the Wirral Society and Irby, Thurstaston and Pensby Amenity Society (ITPAS), meet to exchange information, coordinate approaches and agree the best way to respond to the Council's development of the Local Plan. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is also represented at these meetings and they, together with the Wirral Society, have been funding a consultant to help us in preparing our responses to the Council and MHCLG consultations. Ultimately the Council's Local Plan will be sent to the Government for inspection. Our challenges to the Plan need to be aimed at the inspector. In building our case, the Alliance will need to engage consultants and legal advisors. This will require significant funding. The Heswall Society, together with the other member organisations, will provide contributions, but it is also the intention to set up a crowd funding scheme to further boost this fund.

I am pleased to report that there have been no changes to the Committee since the last newsletter. This does not mean that we are not looking for new people to help us. Once again, however, we are looking to boost the numbers on our Planning Group. If you feel you could help us either with the general Committee work or more specifically with planning, then please do get in touch with any Committee member.



Alison McGovern MP plus Committee members

In September, I and three other Committee members arranged a meeting with our MP Alison McGovern. The main reason was to discuss the Council's review of the Green Belt. I briefly went over the topics that were presented at our September Open Meeting and provided Alison with a copy of our handout. I am pleased to report that our views of the Green Belt are very much aligned. Our MP has the basic view that Green Belt should not be

built on, and agrees with us that the predicted need for future housing over the next 15 years does not need to go into the Green Belt.

I also gave our MP an update on the Police Station, the Telephone Kiosk, Heswall in Bloom and Planning.

Our series of Open Meetings for the new season started very well in November with an excellent and entertaining talk about the history of the Bibby Line given to us by Christina Spencer. Christina worked for the Bibby Line Group for 27 years, eight of them as their Archivist, and she was able to provide us with a fascinating history of the Line from its inception up to the present day. In December, and in conjunction with the rector of St Peter's Church, we once again had our carol singing around the tree in the lower village. The turnout was pleasingly high and, in contrast to last year, the rain kept away.



Parkgate circa 1915

Our first Open Meeting of the new year got off to a great start with a talk about Parkgate from Anthony Annakin-Smith. His talk provided us with a fascinating insight into the history of Parkgate from the seventeenth century through to the present day interspersed with many amusing anecdotes.

In the Autumn Newsletter I informed readers that all formalities towards our adoption of the telephone kiosk in the lower village had been completed. The kiosk has now been restored and the contributions from the local residents towards the cost of this (including members) have been appreciated. The Society would like to thank in particular Mark Gorton (Heswall Today) and Caroline Cartwright (Lower Village Newsagents) for their fundraising and to DBK Builders for installing the new door frame. At the beginning of October we had an 'official' short adoption ceremony. The event was well attended and my thanks go to Roger Lane for arranging and presiding over the event in my absence due to holidays.



Pictured: Mark Gorton and Caroline Cartwright

Now that the Society owns the kiosk, our thoughts are turning to how it might be best used. Options currently under consideration are keeping it empty, installing a defibrillator, converting to a mini library. If you have any thoughts on this please let me know.

At the time of our last Newsletter I reported that we had the disappointing news that our submission to Historic England to get the police station listed had failed. Subsequent to this news I wrote to the Police and Crime Commissioner (Jane Kennedy), informing her of this decision but emphasising the importance of the building to local people and urging her to keep this in consideration when reviewing bids.



Heswall Police Station

I received a reply from Jane in which she recognises the high regard in which the building is held by the public but states, as expected, that she is under a legal obligation to consider best value for Merseyside Police during the tender process and subsequent sale of the station. This does not bode well for the site. Since then I have no further news to provide as to its future.

The Society continues to coordinate the work of the Heswall in Bloom team. The team primarily consists of the Heswall Society and a group of dedicated volunteers supported by Council representatives. The Society now acts as the 'banker' for the group, putting any Heswall in Bloom funds collected into a restricted fund within the Society accounts. Discussions with the Council have started about the possibility of using a petrol mower to cut the grass around the beds if it grows too long between Council scheduled cuts. The risk assessment that I prepared earlier has been updated to anticipate a positive



response. Planting out for winter was delayed slightly due to the mild weather but was completed in December with Dale Farm being used to source a number of the flowers. In addition, daffodils and



narcissi bulbs (500) have been planted in front of the library and hopefully this will provide some welcome spring cheer to passers by. Finally Merseytravel have indicated that they are happy to fund three free-standing planters (of the type nearby in Telegraph Road) at Heswall Bus Station, and the Group is looking at ways to source funds to buy hanging planters for the rails at the Bus Station to complement these planters.

The Society continues to support the various 'Friends' groups that are doing an excellent job in improving our local community and is working to establish a new one for Feather Lane Woods (the woods below Tesco - see later).

The Heswall Society maintains its representation on the Heswall and District Business Association (HDBA) and, once again, we provided a donation towards the Christmas lights.

The Society continues to work closely with Fergus Adams, the Council's Constituency Manager for Wirral South and with Ray Squire our Community Representative.

We are particularly appreciative of the support we have been getting from our three local councillors: Les Rowlands, Andrew & Kathy Hodson on planning and Green Belt issues in particular.

In order that the Society understands the issues that are important to us in a broader context and can provide and indeed obtain wider support as and when appropriate, we maintain membership of the Wirral Society, the Merseyside Civic Society, the North West Association of Civic Trusts and the Wirral History and Heritage Association. As will be seen from the opening section, we are working particularly closely with the Wirral Society at present on Green Belt/Local Plan issues.

Steve Anderson

PLANNING MATTERS

In the seven months since the Autumn Newsletter was prepared, your Committee has considered 95 planning applications, of which we objected to 17 and made comments on 5. I would like to thank our small Planning Group of Society Members who help with the process of checking and considering Planning Applications. If you feel that this is something which you might be interested in and would like to know more, please contact me via the Society website or Membership Card details.

In the last Newsletter, I listed a number of applications where the Council's decisions were still pending and I can now update you on these:

APP/17/01445 - The creation of an access road and 13 pitches for static holiday caravans, Banks Road - this was refused on 14th September but an Appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate.

APP/17/01354 - Erection of a 24hr pay at the pump only petrol filling station at Tesco Superstore, TELEGRAPH ROAD - this has been withdrawn.

APP/17/01545 - 89 Milner Road Conversion of existing house to three apartments including side and second floor extensions - this has been refused.

I reported that the first application for apartments on the site of the former Silverdale Medical Centre in Mount Avenue having been withdrawn, a second application (for 9 apartments) had been made. Your Committee objected to this application and I am pleased to report that it has been refused. We expect a new proposal for the site to be submitted in the coming weeks.

The most recent application for the demolition of 1 Rocky Lane and the construction of 6 apartments (APP/18/01016) was submitted in August. Various revised drawings have been submitted and the application has now been approved.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the Rocky Lane and Silverdale petitions.

In May 2018 an application (OUT/18/00322) was submitted for demolition of existing structures and the erection of 35 dwellings (with all matters reserved except for means of access) on Green Belt Land at Newhall Centre, Chester High Road - it is still to be determined.

One of the most significant changes in Heswall Centre will be the replacement of the Church of the Good Shepherd and Parish Hall. We had various reservations about the detailed design which we made known at an early consultation stage and in response to the application. The Council has now approved it but with a number of matters to be agreed at a later date.

Just as we are finalising the Newsletter an application for the erection of a three-storey apartment block at 1 Oldfield Drive has appeared on the Council website. The existing bungalow which stands on the corner of Oldfield Drive and Telegraph Road would be demolished. The new apartment block would be the first building on the right hand side of the road on entering Heswall from the direction of West Kirby. Your Committee has decided to make a strong objection.

We have considered the usual range of applications for extensions and infill development in the gardens of existing houses and objected where appropriate. I will mention just two of these.

In January 2018 an application (APP/18/00080) was made for a new dwelling at Farr End 19 Farr Hall Drive on a plot of land, formerly garden of an adjacent house. The Society objected because of the effect on the character of the area, and worked with local people who also opposed the project. The application was withdrawn and a new proposal submitted. Your Committee considered the new proposal was also a cramped development out of character with the area and opposed it, again working closely with local residents. Council Officers recommended that the new application be approved but the Planning Committee was persuaded that it be refused. The applicant appealed to the Planning Inspectorate which dismissed the appeal in January 2019.

78 Dawstone Road was a bungalow in extensive treed grounds at the junction of Dawstone Road and Well Lane. In 2015 there was an application to demolish it and construct two detached dwellings. The Society objected and it was withdrawn. A subsequent application for buildings with reduced mass was approved. In 2017 an application to increase the size of the house on the plot furthest from Well Lane was approved but, after the Society and others objected, an application to increase the building closest to Well Lane was withdrawn. In January 2019 an application APP/19/00034 was submitted instead. We are examining this but it seems not to exceed the footprint of the approved project.

We have also been concerned about the standard and accuracy of some applications and about lack of compliance with conditions imposed when applications have been approved.

The Chairman's Notes refer to the Society's responses to Local and National Planning Consultations. The final 18 page response to the Council's Local Plan consultation challenged the Council's figures relating to the availability of land for housing, the housing need and made the case that it is not necessary to release Green Belt land for development. Our submission can be seen on The Heswall Society website. A related national consultation was carried out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which has made known its discontent that the most recent Office for National Statistics household forecasts do not justify the number of houses it seeks to build when entered into its standard formula. Again, our response is on The Heswall Society website. Looking to the future, in early Spring we expect the Council to publish a summary of the responses to its consultation but it only proposes to publish its 'responses to the responses' alongside the draft Local Plan. We will therefore not know what account the Council will

take of our submission until then. The Council is reviewing the timetable for the preparation of the draft Local Plan.

As time passes there is greater clarity about the potential of brownfield sites. In December The Council approved an application (DLS/18/00715) for 500 apartments at Wirral Waters. Another application (APP/18/00470) for 'The erection of a specialist care village comprising 72 care spaces incorporated into six household clusters, 34 apartments and 3 guest bedrooms' was submitted in April, and a Council determination is pending. On 9th January, Peel Holdings announced that contracts had been exchanged on the £55m development collaboration between Peel L&P and Urban Splash, which will incorporate 347 modular homes. The Council had not included any of these developments in the first 5 year period of Local Plan Consultation. Peel have said "We're now just waiting on the final piece of the jigsaw, securing a Housing Infrastructure Fund grant from Homes England. Only then can we finally get the first wave of housing underway at Wirral Waters."

Dennis Clegg

OPEN SPACES

We have held a very constructive meeting regarding Feather Lane Woods with Tesco's Manager and Community Officer. They have offered help with working parties and the use of their canteen or coffee shop for meetings.



Feather Lane Woods

By the time this Newsletter is printed, we will know the outcome of an Open Meeting which will have been held to establish the viability of forming a Friends group for the woods.

We also continue to liaise with the Friends Groups for the Dales, Dawstone Park and for Hill House Park and Gardens.

CONSERVATION AREAS

During the course of 2018 we received notification of twelve applications for tree works either to trees with Tree Preservation Orders attached or to trees within our 2 Conservation Areas. We commented on two of these applications and objected to one.

John Pyke

PARKS

Castle Buildings Flowerbeds



Castle Buildings

The pansies in the flowerbeds are giving some colour at the moment, and should improve once some warmer weather arrives. I am keeping the surrounding areas under control and am pleased to report less damage to the plants on the edges nearest to the shops than in the Summer. Perhaps with the ground so hard, it is less obvious!

Some people still find parking there without going up on the flowerbeds impossible!

The roses have had a light prune and will receive a further prune before March to reduce the height of the bushes for next year. I think the roses did particularly well last year; they enjoyed the hot summer. We will be feeding

the flowerbeds and generally trying to improve the 'informal pathways' across the grass.

Dawstone Park

The Green Flag Status was achieved yet again and the new flag has been hoisted.

The Committee continues to hold regular working parties to keep the Park looking good. Details of what is going on in the Park can be seen on the Notice Board by the entrance in Dawstone Road or on the Friends of Dawstone Park Facebook page.

Angie Mounsey



LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

As part of the commemoration of the end of the First World War, Jenny McDonald helped prepare a summary of the biographical details of the twelve WW1 soldiers honoured on the plaque at the rear of Heswall Methodist Church. This information was used during the service of remembrance in the Church and was later published in the December edition of the Heswall Magazine. In the October edition, we covered the events of 1941 when the Second World War was impacting life in Heswall.

Our most recent article reached back further in history, covering the events leading to the visit of William III to Gayton Hall.

The Heswall Society website continues to receive many requests for information from people researching their family history, and we enjoy the challenge of providing the answers to their queries to the best of our ability. If you have old photos, painting or documents relating to Heswall and would like us to help you explore the stories behind them, please contact us (roger.m.lane@btinternet.com. Tel: 0151-342 9269).

Roger Lane

LOWER VILLAGE ACTION GROUP



possible initiatives are being pursued.

The Society was recently approached by shopkeepers, businesses and local residents of the Lower Village, for help in forming a group similar to the Heswall & District Business Association, but exclusively focused on reinvigorating the Lower Village. This newly formed group has held its inaugural meeting following which, a number of

Barry Hopkins

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Wednesday **27th March 2019** 7.30pm at Heswall Hall.
AGM followed by speaker Christopher Storey QC. 'Horace Rumpole - hero or anti-hero?'



Monday **23rd September 2019** 8.00pm at Heswall Hall.
Speaker- Gavin Hunter. 'Wirral's Historic Dee Coast Lines'.

Monday **11th November 2019** at Heswall Hall.
Speaker – Christine Spencer. 'Living with 60 million foreigners'.
Entertaining talk about living in a strange country with strange foreigners she shares her life with!

Wednesday **11th December 2019** 7.15pm
'Carols around the Tree' - lead by Revd Martin Cannam and accompanied by the Port Sunlight Lyceum Band. Starting at 7.15 outside the gates of St Peter's Church, Lower Heswall.



Meetings normally include an update by the Chairman on matters of current interest to the Society. Please bring a friend - visitors are welcome (please advise the Secretary first. secretary@heswallsociety.org.uk).

Tea/coffee and biscuits are served before talks and at the AGM, between the formal business and the speaker. At some meetings there will be a raffle.

The following dates have been booked for **2020**. Speakers and other details will be confirmed in due course:-

Monday **20 January 2020**
Wednesday **26 February 2020**
Wednesday **25 March 2020 (AGM)**
Wednesday **23 September 2020**
Monday **16 November 2020**

Annabel Barton

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