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The Leamington Society Newsletter

February 2014

Chairman's Notes

Public Inquiry into Coventry and Warwick Gateway

Last year the "Gateway" proposals for developments to the north, west and south of Coventry airport and partly on the Green Belt (see August 2013 newsletter), were "called in" for a decision to be made by the Minister. This will follow a public inquiry at Leamington Town Hall, sitting between 8th April 2014 and 13th May 2014, mostly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. This lengthy inquiry indicates the scale and importance attached to the application. For further details contact the case officer rob.young@warwickdc.gov.uk 01926 456535.

Dining out to the rescue?

Livery Street has struggled as a would-be trendy new shopping street and it is no surprise that the owners have had second thoughts. Apparently the cafés and restaurants did better business than the shops. So they recently applied to convert the whole street to dining (including change of use for 11 former retail units). This change is contrary to existing District policy, but officers recommended the plan to enhance the viability of the town centre.

The residents of Regents Court flats raised objections, especially to increased noise. As a result, conditions were set on outside dining hours and late night movement of tables and chairs. After considerable debate, and with further added conditions, this major application was granted by the Planning Committee.

As an observer, one could not help wondering how many competing rows of themed restaurants Leamington will wish to sample. Once or twice, maybe, but keeping them all in business for years to come?

A Pre-Determined Push for Growth

In 2011 our District Council's initial consultation on a new local Plan asked us about levels of growth. By a clear majority local residents opted for only modest growth. But the council then said "No

Talks and events

**Warwick Castle repairs; the
mysteries of lime mortar**

Stafford Holmes

Tuesday, March 4th, 7.30

Lord Leycester Hospital, Warwick

Guided tour of ancient Coventry

**Meet at Coventry Rail Station,
Wednesday, April 30th, 10.30**

**Tour by guide Roger Bailey
Lunch at Herbert Museum after tour**

AGM

**followed by refreshments from
Aubrey Allen, and then a talk on**

Meat

by Russell Allen

Thursday, May 8th, 7.00

ChristChurch,

Priory Terrace, CV31 1BA

Leamington Society Awards, 2014

Thursday, July 10th, 7.15 for 7.30
Conference Centre, Dormer Place

There have been numerous reports over the last eight years suggesting ways to improve the situation. In the beginning the reports focussed on how to bring shoppers back to our streets – shopping malls We had Mary Portas’ recommendations, then counter views by Bill Grimsey followed by those of Mike Williams. A common feature of all these reports was their tendency to prescribe a common set of recommendations for all towns.

We have also had the sequence of reports from Javelin that emphasised how the nation’s shopping habits are changing with the convenience of ordering via the internet, whether from home or via the smart phone or tablet, and the convenience of click and collect. Major retailers are reporting an ever increasing proportion of their sales being online. The power of the internet causes everything in its wake to change fast; the retailing scene is no different.



Royal Pump Rooms

It was recently estimated by Jones Lang LaSalle Property that nearly 80% of retail leases will expire within the next five years.

Retailers will then be able to vacate any unprofitable retail outlet without penalty.

Now, in January 2014, we have a report from APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence). This argues that chasing the rebirth of town centres by trying to revitalise shopping is the wrong approach. Instead APSE recommends that local authority should:

- “Use assets as hubs for service delivery.
- “Promote the historical importance of town centre assets.
- “Embed the regenerative potential of assets into core strategy.
- “Use local authority assets for employment and economic gain.
- “Develop partnership and investment vehicles.
- “Measure and promote the economic importance of assets.



Town Hall

Roger Charters

- “Create 'meanwhile' uses for vacant assets.
- “Use public realm improvements.
- “Think town centre for new administrative buildings.
- “Develop a cross-public sector comprehensive asset register.”

Of these ten recommendations two stand out for WDC and Leamington. The second bullet point relates to the Pump Rooms; of course their net costs must be minimised by maximising their



February 2014

Notice is hereby given that the Fifty-eighth **Annual General Meeting** of the Leamington Society will be held on **Thursday, 8th of May 2014**, starting at 7.00, in **ChristChurch, Priory Terrace, Leamington Spa, CV31 1BA**.

Richard Ashworth, Chairman

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 9th of May 2013
3. Matters arising from the Minutes not included elsewhere
4. Amendment to Constitution
5. To receive reports from the Chairman and Sub Committees
6. To receive the independently examined Accounts of the Society for 2013 - 2014
7. Election of Officers:
Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer
8. Election of four Committee Members
9. Election of Independent Examiner
10. Any other Business.

PLEASE NOTE: **Nominations** of candidates for Officers and Committee must be forwarded to the **Chairman not later than Thursday, 17th, April 2014**. Any voting will be by Secret Ballot at the Meeting.

Any motions for consideration at the meeting should also be received by this date. Nominations or motions will **not** be accepted at the Meeting. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Chairman.

If there is to be an election or if any motion is received, notice will be sent to members seven days before the Annual General Meeting.

After the conclusion of formal business of the AGM we will break for refreshments after which Russell Allen (of Aubrey Allen), will talk on *Meat*.