



NEWSLETTER NO 80 SUMMER 2017

Weymouth Civic Society works to conserve the historic towns and harbours of Weymouth and Portland and to enhance their built environment.

Dear Members and Friends

Welcome to our summer newsletter which contains information about ongoing projects which I hope you will find interesting.

Our planning and environment committee has had a busy time and looks as if this will continue so I wish to pay tribute to Pru and Brenda in particular who work so hard keeping us all up to speed with the goings-on around Weymouth and Portland. Brenda prepares thoroughly for every meeting of the committee having printed out plans and details for any application we feel is worthy of discussion. She also composes eloquent letters which we discuss during the meetings, no mean feat with many controversial points having to be covered. Pru, as present chairman of that committee, has added dynamism and fresh ideas to the committee's work where we are taking a more pro-active approach to issues. The committee again was very active in the judging of suggestions for the annual awards and finally awarded the plaque to McCarthy and Stone for their development on the old fire-station site, which they have admitted their most difficult build to date. They were very appreciative of the award and featured it in their national house magazine.

From the awards came the initiative to mark Civic Day this year on June 17th, by celebrating the Borough's parks and gardens. David Carter has enthusiastically taken on board the organising of the event, and for this we thank him. He has formed a large committee of representatives of 'friends of various gardens' and other interested people. Please do participate if you can.

Dawn Barnes has stood down from the Board and we thank her for her hard work in organising very interesting meetings at St Nicholas, which has proved a much more accessible venue for our gatherings, although we would like to see more members join us on many third Monday evenings. Dawn has arranged outings as well, one of which was a visit to Castletown to look at the proposed D-Day centre. This was about nine months ago. We followed up the visit by loaning artefacts from the Nothe Fort and by discussing historical accuracy, particularly in relation to the phoenix caissons. We were invited back recently to view the centre before its opening and all who attended were impressed with the result. Do go and visit if you have not been. Dawn will be continuing to help with social events. Another person to stand down is Andy White who has had to do so for family reasons. We thank him also for his contribution and hope to see him back in the future. We welcome Jonathan Turner and Dr Keith Holdaway to the Board and hope that they will find it a rewarding experience.

The Tudor House, under the custodianship of Dorothy Hyman is doing well with normal visits and special events. Her team enthusiastically dress up to welcome visitors of all ages. If you have not made it to one of these events, do come, they are great fun.

No report would be complete without mentioning the Nothe Fort which continues its major contribution to the tourist industry in the town. One recent development is a proposal brought forward by the Civic Society Board is that we feel it time for the Nothe Fort to become a charity in its own right. It is a big and successful organisation which needs to run its own affairs. It has a bright future ahead. There is much to be done before such a charity could be set up and operating so nothing is going to happen quickly, and certainly not until the Civic Society Board is sure the transfer of all operations would be successful.

Mary Bennett – Chairman

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

LAND SOUTH OF NOTTINGTON LANE

The proposed 340 dwellings on the fields south of Nottingham Lane, west of Dorchester Road attracted many objections and was refused by the Council, contrary to the officer's recommendation of approval. The developers lodged appeal, which is still awaiting a decision; meanwhile they have submitted a full application, much the same as the original, but again generating nearly 100 representations. Our Society did not object outright, largely because the Local Plan already earmarks this site for large-scale housing. However, we are still concerned about several matters, including the proposed traffic arrangements for access to this very large site from Nottingham Lane, which already has problems.

23 OLD CASTLE ROAD

There have already been two approvals for three houses on this site. Now we objected once again. Apart from the instability of the site, we think this design is awkward and unsatisfactory, totally lacking in visual interest, and quite inappropriate on this very sensitive site, which should be an attractive green backdrop to the beauty of the Cove below.

RE-USE OF REDUNDANT SCHOOLSITES

Thornlow School, Connaught Road. The proposed replacement buildings echo the appearance of the existing tall red-brick buildings packed tightly on the site, but we are afraid that they will have a heavy and overwhelming appearance, sited as they are very close to the road, in contrast to the other, fine houses of this Conservation Area. We also share the concerns of some local people that this area already suffers from severe parking congestion connected with Holy Trinity School, which would be exacerbated if insufficient parking provision is made in the layout of the site.

Underhill Junior School, Portland, sits on the edge of a cliff above Chesil Cove and the grassy terraces of the Chiswell Earthworks. We are pleased that the main building is to be retained and converted, but the appearance of the proposed houses backing on to this cliff is in our view totally inappropriate to the traditional character of Portland, with a line of high, sharply pointed gables that would stand atop the cliff in this important setting to the cove. We agree with the many local people, who experience vehicle congestion in this area already and are worried about the proposed provision for parking.

TWO OLD PROPERTIES

2-4 COBURG PLACE – BUILDING BY THE KING'S STATUE

This is the round-ended building that sits in an important location by the King's Statue, curving round into St Thomas Street. As part of a pair with Statue House, it creates a fine background for the Statue, with which it is contemporary. Long in need of care, it now has hope of refurbishment and conversion to offices and flats. Would that similar care could be given to its partner.



KING'S STATUE COBURG PLACE AND ST THOMS STREET

THE OLD ROOMS – 17 TRINITY STREET

The fine stone-built Elizabethan house in Trinity Street, on the opposite side of the road to the Society's own Tudor House, has been getting neglected in recent times to the extent that it has caused some concern locally. This ancient house is important to Weymouth's history, having been the residence of an early Mayor,



THE OLD ROOMS 17 TRNITY STREET

Thomas Gear, in 1618, then become the town's first Assembly Rooms in the 1760s
The property has now been taken over by Greene King, who have taken steps to repair the building and make it suitable for a new tenancy. We had contacted them and the Council about the deteriorating condition of the house last September, and we are pleased to know that improvement work is planned.

TUDOR HOUSE

Having just completed our annual spring clean the House is looking its best, smelling of linseed oil and lavender polish just as it should, and ready to welcome visitors for the summer.

We have just opened for the Season and we have high hopes for a busy one, with another of our Free Entry days in the early stages of planning.

This will be a summer celebration showing traditional Tudor crafts which some of our Volunteers will be demonstrating.

Our recorded talks for each room are now complete, these are small devices in each room, motion activated which describe the room and contents, they will be a useful tool on days when we are very busy, or only have two volunteers on duty.

We are lucky enough to have gained two new Volunteers who are promising to be a valuable asset. Without the dedication and input from our existing team of Volunteers the House could not continue to be open. But..... we are always looking for more!

On a more serious note we are also addressing the “ behind the scenes matters”, such as Risk Assessment ,Policies and maintenance, not nearly as enjoyable as dressing up and bringing the house to life, but essential for the wellbeing of the House, the Volunteers and our visitors.

Dorothy Hyman – Custodian

NOTHE FORT NEWS

The season started on 1st April with Reception teams working in a smart refurbished shop area. Now we are past the first half of May, numbers are picking up and we look forward to a busy and successful year. Only one problem – nearly every reception team is short staffed. Please, please talk to all your friends, members of clubs that you belong to, neighbours, in fact anyone who you think might be interested in joining the Fort as a volunteer. Tell them they can call in any day and talk to people on Reception to find out what we do and pick up an application form.

Cruise Ships

Two volunteers go down to meet passengers from the cruise ships. They talk to visitors getting off the coaches at the back of Brewers Quay and hand out Fort leaflets, which have a special discount price of £5. They often only have a short time ashore so would only spend an hour or so with us before heading off to the other delights of Weymouth! This venture proved to be really successful, bringing 45 + extra visitors into the Fort.

Open Air Cinema – a new venture

'Lost Cinema' is coming to the Fort on Friday 2th June showing 'Trainspotting' and on Saturday 3rd June showing 'Ghost'. Tickets are available on line from Lost Cinema. This is a new venture for Nothe Fort so it would be great if you could come along and support us.

Matchstick Fleet

Phil Warren will be back again from 9 – 10 June with his wonderful ships and planes – **and this will be his last year.** There will be a lot of publicity about Phil's retirement in the press and possibly on television, so we expect a large number of visitors to come to see his amazing lifelong hobby. We are sure Phil has attracted many hundreds of visitors over the 23 years that he has brought his display in the Fort.

Moonlight Swing Band

We have a fantastic group of musicians coming into the Fort on Sunday 18th June – the Moonlight Swing Band – 18 musicians and 2 vocalists. The conductor Kevin Morgan plays the trombone professionally with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, so expect a very high level of performance. Gates open at 6pm for picnics or a pre-show dinner, which must be booked in advance with Jill, of the Fort Cafe. All seating provided, full bar and snacks – and a dance floor!

Jane Chandler – Events Organiser

WEYMOUTH LIBRARY

What do you know about Weymouth's past?

Do you want to know more?

If you want help in researching Weymouth's history go to Weymouth Library on the last Tuesday in the month between 11 am and 1 pm and experts will be there to help you.



NATIONAL CIVIC DAY- Saturday, 17th June 2017

Celebrating Weymouth & Portland's Parks and Gardens

In 2016 our Society awarded Weymouth and Portland Borough Council's Parks and Open Space Service a 'Letter of Appreciation' to recognise the planting and regular maintenance of the gardens in the Borough and the Esplanade flower beds, despite the severely limited budgets available and acknowledged that many of the Borough's gardens are supported by enthusiastic 'Friends' groups. In previous years we have also acknowledged Sandsfoot Castle Gardens and the Governor's Garden on Portland.

Now we have decided that this year we should celebrate National Civic Day on Saturday 17th June. Civic Day is initiated annually by 'Civic Voice', the national association of civic societies, as a celebration of civic pride when communities across the country hold events to celebrate their area. Last year there were over 150 Civic Day events across the country. We have chosen to celebrate our Parks and Gardens. The borough's Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces Service, all of the established Friends groups of the public gardens and the Mayor for 2017-8 are supporting this initiative which has been registered with the Civic Voice.

Our member David Carter has gathered a committee, mainly of representatives of friends groups. They have produced maps showing all the public gardens in the borough and posters to advertise the event. There will be two small manned exhibitions about the event at which copies of the maps will be handed out.

The exhibition in Weymouth will be in the Haven Owners Lounge on Weymouth Esplanade (the old TIC) on Monday 12th June through to Saturday 17th June, between 10am and 4pm and on Portland in the foyer of the Portland Tesco on Sunday 11th June and Friday 16th June, between 10am and 4pm.

These exhibitions will describe the location of the gardens, their history, outstanding features and details of the various Friends groups, what they do, how to contact them and enable groups to advertise their 2017 programme of activities and appeal for volunteers.

Each garden that has a Friends group will be holding an event in their garden or have a presence in the garden to tell visitors about the garden and what their Friends group does. Those gardens without Friends groups will appear as waypoints on the map.

A Facebook page has been established, 'Parks, Gardens, Trails and Open Spaces of Weymouth and Portland' which already has over 500 followers where members of the public are invited to post their photos of our gardens.

So why not book 17th June as a day to explore the beautiful public spaces of our Borough and be proud of them.

David Carter – Weymouth Civic Society



OBITUARY – Mike Martin

One of the most long-standing and dedicated members of the Society, I Martin, has died. In addition to his service in other aspects of the Society Mike's involvement with the planning side dated back to the days of four Ernest Wamsley Lewis, about whose lively character he reminisced on occasions. Mike was one of the original founders of this Committee, previously called the Plans Group, and was its Chairman from 1990 onwards until he retired owing to ill health in 2014. He worked with great dedication at the tasks involved, carefully studying all the hundreds of plans and documents which came before us. He created the first Weymouth Town Walk leaflets, led Town Walks at times, and took part in a range of other initiatives including the Society's Annual Awards from their earliest beginnings in 1979. He was one of the first volunteers at the Nothe Fort in 1980 and made a Life Member of WCS in 2009. Our sympathies are with his widow Jean and his family - Richard, Penny, James and Katherine.



WEYMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

Programme of Meetings and Visits 2017

June 19 **Growing and Showing Flowers and Vegetables**
St Nicholas Mark Read of P & M Read Florists Broadway
Buxton Rd

July 17 **VISIT to Wessex Water Pumping Station & Supply**
Sutton Poyntz guided by John Willows
2.30pm Free to members £2 to non-members

September 18 **Weymouth and Portland Access Group**
St Nicholas Carol Chinn and Mike Kelly
Buxton Rd

October 16 **VISIT to Cumber Veterinary Practice**
Chickerell A tour and a Talk by Dave Cumber
Link Park at Cumber Veterinary Practice, UnitD1 Link Park
7.30pm Chickerell Link Road, Weymouth DT3 4FL

*Unless otherwise stated all meetings start at 7.30 at St Nicholas Church,
Buxton Road and are open to the public as well as members' guests.
A contribution of £2 per person is invited towards expenses of each meeting.*

Committee Meetings

Board Meetings

Mondays at the Fort 10.30am

Planning & Environment

Fridays at 71 Roman Road 4.00pm

June 5

June 9

July 3

July 7

August 7

August 11

September 4

September 8

October 2

October 8

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