



# SOUTHWELL CIVIC SOCIETY

## Newsletter - October 2016

### SOUTHWELL 1971 to 2016 – SOME REFLECTIONS by Brendan Haigh, Chairman

I have lived in Southwell for just over 45 years, which I know is fewer than many of our members. However, during the course of writing a booklet for the Society I reflected on some of the changes which have occurred during that time.

The centre of the town has changed very little. The demolition of old buildings in King Street and Burgage Lane had taken place before I arrived. There is, of course, the new one-way traffic system which incorporates lay-bys, new paving and bollards.

I remember an earlier scheme in the Seventies which was not well received. As the then County Councillor for the town I was told that we would not have the opportunity of another scheme for a generation or more and so it turned out to be. An even earlier ill-thought-out proposal was for an inner relief road which would have gone through the back garden of my present house in Church Street!

There are fewer food shops since the relocation of the Co-op to the Ropewalk and the closure many years ago of the high class grocers, Burtons, in the premises now occupied by Catherine's ladies fashion shop. Westgate has seen the closure of three small grocery shops. The Co-op move happily made possible the building of the splendid new library in 2006.

When I arrived the Minster School in Church Street was still a grammar school and had boarders at Hill House. It was shortly to join the Edward Cludd Secondary Modern to form a split-site comprehensive school until the new building in Nottingham Road was erected.

The adjacent Leisure Centre basically comprised a swimming pool and a couple of squash courts which were situated together with their own bar in the school buildings. The Sports Hall was not to be added until later with new squash courts and the refurbishment of the swimming pool to follow.

The real growth of housing had begun in the Sixties but subsequently there have been significant new developments particularly in the Halam Road area and to the north of Newark Road.

The Churches have remained much the same except for a fine new stained glass West window in the Minster and the reordering of the seating at Holy Trinity. There have however, been considerable changes to their ancillary buildings.

The Minster's Trebeck parish hall in Queen Street moved to its present site in Bishop's Drive whilst the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches both acquired new halls. The Minster also has a new refectory and shop to replace former inadequate facilities.

We are lucky that unlike many other towns changes have usually been for the better and the character of the town has been generally preserved.

Let us hope that it continues to be the case in the years that lie ahead.



*Church Street before the one-way system was introduced.*

# PLANNING REPORT

by Mike Struggles, Planning Secretary

The Minster School site on Church Street has been a feature of the annual planning report for over fourteen years, and now, as in all good fairy stories, we have a happy ending. The purchase and subsequent generous donation to the community by an anonymous benefactor is truly remarkable. The allocation of thirteen houses in the District Council's forward plans has been removed.

In the Referendum held on 22 September the population of Southwell accepted the Neighbourhood Plan and this will give the Town Council greater control over new developments in the town. The plan has come into existence since the last round of housing allocations. Nevertheless, the Council will be able to determine the details of the individual sites.

Two of the sites, Beckett's Field on Nottingham Road and the Rainbow's site on the Burgage are now under construction, and a third at Springfield on Halloughton Road received planning permission subject to undisclosed conditions. However, the Society

is disappointed that an engineered, fully designed, drainage scheme was not called for prior to the planning approval. The applicant is a private individual and once a developer is appointed we expect further amendments to the scheme.

Development in the countryside and inappropriate barn conversions continue to be a cause for concern. In Westhorpe a "Dutch barn" has been the subject of a third planning application to convert it into a dwelling. We are strongly of the opinion that what is in fact a corrugated steel canopy supported on rusting steel columns is not a true barn or a redundant farm building.

On Crink Lane we have an example of creeping development. Initially there were two wooden stables erected to give horses shelter in inclement weather. The next stage was the erection of more buildings and an exercise ring. The latest application was for a two-storey house. This house if it had been approved would have been directly in line with the classic view of the Minster from Crink Lane.

The number of planning applications decreased this year from around one hundred in previous years to just over sixty. However, the number to which we made some objection to has remained the same at approximately twenty-five. There have been no new large developments.

The District Council is currently reviewing its Local Development Framework Plan. This is being updated to cover the period 2013 to 2033 from the previous period 2006 to 2026. The main effect for Southwell is that due to a new method of predicting housing need there is no requirement to allocate any more housing sites even though the plan period extends for another seven years. In fact the sites already identified, if developed to their current capacity will deliver seventy-nine more houses than the minimum requirement.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the Society's planning committee for giving their time and careful consideration of the applications ensuring that our decisions are transparent and fair to all parties.



*Beckett's Field as it appeared in February 2016.*



*Beckett's Field photographed in September.*

# EVENTS REPORT

by Katy Todd, Events Organiser

There were talks, walks, visits and a summer garden party during the year which were enjoyed by around 300 members, guests and local residents.

Our first event in February was an action-packed talk by Nottinghamshire author Pamela Littlewood on the Bristowes of Beesthorpe.

In April there were two visits to Veolia's Materials Recycling Facility at Mansfield, the first visit being over-subscribed. We were welcomed by Lesley Taylor who supplied us with coffee and chocolate biscuits before giving a most interesting presentation on what, and what not, to put in the grey bins together with statistics and facts on recycling. There was a short practical sorting exercise before we were taken on a tour of the plant.

In May a contingent of members and their guests

travelled on the top deck of the Pathfinder 100 bus for a Victorian Walk provided by the Nottingham Civic Society. Our excellent guide took us to parts of Nottingham that most of the party did not know.

In June we went by coach to Northampton to visit 78 Derngate, Architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh's only commission in England. On arrival there was coffee and home-made biscuits and our guides were incredibly knowledgeable and enthusiastic.

The summer garden party was held at the home of Mrs Jenny Farr. Essentially Brass provided the musical entertainment and the lunch was prepared by the Society Catering Corps, led by Vanessa Johnston.

The Society also took part in the Christmas Tree Festival, had a presence at the



*The iconic front door of 78 Derngate, Northampton which the Society visited in June.*

Saturday market in May and a stall at the Fun Day in June, though this did not continue as planned due to torrential rain.

The Society worked with other local organisations on the Heritage Open Days and the talk by Andy Weaver from Southwell Archaeology Group as part of Heritage Open Days was well attended.

The Society has purchased new advertising banners to show the work of the Society and these have been an excellent means of promoting the Society at events in the town.

The Society gives thanks to Southwell Library for hosting our talks, to our speakers, guides, helpers and hosts and to everyone who supported the 2016 events. The 2017 programme is already in hand and will be announced in the New Year.



*Committee members on the Society's stand on the Burgage on the Heritage Open Day in September. Despite the inclement weather many visitors were able to see the work of the Society.*

## **SOUTHWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Plan secured overwhelming support at the Referendum on the 22nd September when 1,351 (92.5%) voted in favour with only 109 against. The Society played a major part in the preparation of the Plan with Brendan Haigh acting as the convenor of the Steering Group in its final year and Peter Kent and John Martindale and others contributing much time and effort. The design guide incorporated in the Plan was almost wholly the work of the Society.

We used our financial resources to campaign for a positive vote with handbills, a half-page advertisement in the Bramley and press contributions. This not only helped to secure the good result but also raised the public profile of the Society.

The Plan now becomes part of the statutory Local Plan and must be used by the District Council when determining planning applications. It will also be used by the Town Council and our own Society when making representations on such applications.

## **BETTY ARUNDEL'S PLANTER**

Last year we reported that the Society had commissioned a stone planter in recognition of Betty Arundel's long service to the Society as Planning Secretary.

This year, Reach, outside whose offices the planter is located, kindly planted out the new planter and in July we were able to welcome Betty and some of her family to see it.

Betty came over from the residential home in Derbyshire where she now lives. After inspecting the planter we entertained Betty and her relatives to tea in the Refectory.

## **HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**

The Society has participated in the annual Heritage Open Days events on a number of occasions in the past. This year we helped to coordinate the local programme of events arranged by various organisations including the Minster, the Workhouse and the Community Archeology Group. We also contributed to the cost of a handbill which was distributed to every house in the town.

Our own contribution was a talk in the Library by Andy Weaver on the town's pre-1750 timber-framed buildings and witch marks on beams. Over eighty people attended the meeting, and this was bettered on the Sunday when we facilitated the opening of Brackenhurst Hall and gardens which had some 150 visitors. We are grateful to Nottingham Trent University for their enthusiastic help and for arranging an exhibition of historic photos and agricultural equipment.



*Brendan Haigh (Chairman), Betty (Past Planning Secretary) and Mike Struggles (Current Planning Secretary) outside Reach offices.*

## **SOUTHWELL BYPASS ABANDONED**

Most members of the Society will be delighted that this project, which has been on the cards for more than 40 years, has been finally abandoned.

The Society has made representations that a bypass would have had a very serious environmental impact upon the setting of the town.

The iconic view of the Minster across the fields from Crink Lane would have been lost and the line of the road could well have become the boundary of the town for development purposes.

Fortunately the downgrading of the A612 and creation of weight restrictions have reduced the number of HGVs using the town as a through route. This has enabled the County Council to remove the blight of a bypass from the town.