



The Paragon, Wilton Road,  
given the Lady Radnor Award -  
see page 5.



*Before .....*

## **SALISBURY CIVIC SOCIETY**

PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE, SECURING OUR ENVIRONMENT,  
SHAPING OUR FUTURE

***To promote high standards of planning and architecture  
To educate in the architecture, history and geography of the area  
To secure the preservation, development and improvement of features of  
public interest within the former Salisbury District***

- The Salisbury Civic Society, which was founded in 1960 as the Salisbury & District Preservation Trust, is involved with the past, present and future of the City and its district. This generates a substantial amount of work which is carried out largely by the Development Committee.
- Its meetings are monthly. New planning applications are examined where they concern listed buildings or conservation areas. Other applications are also looked at where they have special relevance to the future of the city and district. The remit is both ancient and modern. Opinions are formed and comments made where appropriate by this committee the members of which are a mix of both lay and professionally qualified, including architects.
- The Society keeps its members well informed and arranges a very active social calendar. Interesting visits are arranged as well as an exceptional programme of lectures. There is also a scheme to install Society Blue Plaques which are prized by their recipients. All this is the responsibility of the General Purposes Committee.
- The Society's remit is broad so that complex wider issues can be addressed such as the Salisbury Vision, where the Society is represented on the Executive Board.
- The Society is a charity and there is no connection with or formal affiliation to any Local Authority. However the Society is frequently consulted by the Local Authority and has built up a respected working relationship.
- There is a prestigious Architectural Awards Competition, covering both Conservation and New Build with the Awards being presented each year at a New Year's party, traditionally in the Guildhall. Each year a person of distinction is invited to chair the judging panel.
- Members are kept informed through our website, by emails and this quarterly publication.
- The affairs of the Society are overseen by the Executive Committee. Committee lists are on the inside back page.

Contributions to this Quarterly on any relevant subject are welcomed by the Editor and will be acknowledged. Opinions expressed here are those of the contributors and not of the Society, unless attributed.

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*Illustrations:*

*Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Nicola  
Lipscombe, Ash Mills and  
others for the Awards Scheme.*

## **PROGRAMME.**

Meetings will be held at 6.30pm - doors open at 6pm - in the Sanctuary of the Methodist Church in St Edmund's Church Street unless otherwise stated. Details of visits and any changes will be notified on this page and on the Website.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March

**John Winders**

A look at the interesting trees in our City  
and where they can be found

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April - 11am

**Visit - Mary Rose**

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April

**Planning Forum**

**Locally listed buildings and assets of community value**

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June

**AGM at 6.30pm**

**Steve Hannath**

Chalk and Cheese - 'Wiltshire's Rocks and Their Impact on the Natural and Cultural Landscapes'

Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup> - 2pm

**Visit - Houghton Lodge and Gardens**

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September

**Tony Phillips**

'The Fovant Badges' - A synopsis: 'Origins in WWI and subsequent evolution; their rescue and annual maintenance'

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November

**Michael Drury**

Salisbury Cathedral and the Major Repair Programme

Tuesday 17 November

**Open Meeting**

In the Alamein Suite at City Hall

***We welcome new members .....***

Lt Colonel Graham Parker, Stephen Sharp,  
Peter Borchert, Ann Houston, Mr & Mrs Brian Evans.





The stable building in Church Street Wyllye has been rescued from collapsing and restored.



Below left, the full height entrance ceiling in the conversion of the Old Stables, Downton. On the right is the new bellcote at St Nicholas's Little Langford. Pages 5&6.



## **SALISBURY CIVIC SOCIETY CONSERVATION AWARDS SCHEME 2014 – JUDGES' REPORT**

The Lady Radnor Award, for the most outstanding project, is not awarded every year but only for the occasional exceptionally distinguished work.

### **The Paragon, Wilton Road, Salisbury**

These four listed, early Victorian houses had been allowed to fall into a state of utter dereliction after years of institutional use, and were then returned to domestic use by this enormously successful project. What particularly impressed the judges was the wholehearted commitment put into the scheme, going well beyond what a standard commercial exercise in maximising value might have achieved. Historic elements had been retained wherever possible, and faithfully matched where decay and vandalism had put them beyond repair. Small-scale additions had been carefully designed, and the visible workmanship was of the highest standard. The judges hoped the project could set a model for those attempting similar developments.

**Awards** (no particular order in each category)

#### **1) Salisbury Cathedral Chapter House – repairs and conservation**

It was no surprise to discover that the recent campaign of repairs to the Chapter House demonstrated the very high standards seen in previous award-winning projects at the cathedral. The rusting of embedded ironwork and other issues, including the need for work to the glazing, had led to the development of a comprehensive repair programme, to put the exterior of this superb structure back into a state which would leave it needing only minimal attention for years to come. An exemplary approach had clearly been adopted, using the high level of skills achieved by all those involved with the Cathedral repair programme, and the outcome represents another successful chapter in the careful stewardship which the building continues to receive.

#### **2) The Tollgate, Salisbury**

Prominently situated on a road junction near St Martin's church, the C18th pub closed some years ago and conversion to residential use was the obvious way forward for it. The judges felt that the approach taken was just the sort which the awards scheme ought to be supporting, with much thought having gone into retaining original features wherever possible, and appropriate materials used for repairs and any new work. A splendid finishing touch was the large pub-type sign prominently placed on the building, depicting characters similar to those involved in the conversion work.

#### **3) The Old Stables, Long Close, Downton**

This conversion of a barn to residential use had been sensitively handled, to avoid the pitfalls which sometimes detract from such projects. Existing openings had been re-used, with a successful contemporary feature in the glass wall which replaces the former main doors. Internally a simple uncluttered effect had been created, with the full-height space in the entrance area creating a striking focal point. The judges applauded the high insulation values (and the resultant low heating costs) which had been achieved, and

felt that this was a carefully considered and well executed project which had given a new lease of life to a historic structure.

#### **4) Extension at The Knapp, Tisbury**

This C17th stone house had previously showed a fairly uninteresting face to the road, dominated by a garage. This had been transformed by the creation of a gable-ended extension, containing an original window carefully moved from the house rear wall now covered by the new work. A timber and stone porch created a greatly improved house entrance, and the garage had been turned into a high-ceiled kitchen, with a remarkably spacious feel. Unlike some extensions, the project had created new facilities and an extension of space while markedly improving the look of the whole building.

### **Commendations**

#### **1) Little Paradise, Salisbury Cathedral**

Much-needed facilities had been created by filling in the space between the cathedral's south transept and the chapter house, altering the building's original ground plan in a way which required very careful handling. The infilling had been made as subservient as possible to the medieval fabric on three sides, with a new facing wall designed and constructed to a high standard, its stonework reflecting that of the adjacent vestry. The public areas, accessed from the cloisters, displayed high-quality materials and workmanship. Developed from a challenging brief, a tricky project had been carried out to very high standards.

#### **2) New Bellcote at St Nicholas's Church, Little Langford**

The bellcote is one of the most distinctive features of the small church at Little Langford, though its design had changed somewhat over the years. The need for intervention, occasioned by timber decay, was seen as an opportunity to reconsider the details of how the bellcote ought to look. The resultant design, along the same general lines as the previous version, was seen by the judges as a sensibly considered response to the situation, and one with greater longevity which should reduce maintenance obligations in the future. The outcome should ensure that the building maintains its distinctive visual contribution to this corner of the Wylfe valley for many years to come.

#### **3) Repairs to Stables Building in Church Street, Wylfe**

This is a modest building, though with interesting stone windows, possibly re-used from somewhere else. It was identified by the Wylfe conservation area appraisal document as a feature of value, but had deteriorated to the point where there seemed to be a real threat of it disappearing. A new roof, repairs and repointing to the stonework, and renewal of timber boarding, had given it a new lease of life, ensuring that the village would benefit from its presence for the foreseeable future.

*Richard Deane.*

The four loose A4 colour pages, which come with this Quarterly, are the fulfilment of a promise in the last edition to include some illustrations of student projects on the Salisbury gasometer (or gasholder – both terms are valid). At the Society's suggestion, John Comparelli (winner of the Lady Radnor Award in 2008 for his house Overhouse, in Tisbury) asked eleven of his architecture students at the University of the West of England to come up with ideas for re-use of the redundant structure. The result was a wide range of imaginative projects, all of which can now be seen on the Society's website, as can a very interesting article on gasometers from the BBC News Magazine. Most of these projects covered two sheets, and four of the students subsequently revised one of their sheets where necessary, particularly in the area of making text legible when printed at A4 size, to produce the pages included with this Quarterly.

As will be seen, the four projects comprise a planetarium, a theatre, a fishery, and live/work units, described in the original version as a 'theatre of trade'. Other projects, not covered here because of limitations of space but available on the website, include a distillery, a diving school, a library, and a hub for rural and traditional skills. The students were not asked to consider questions of financial gain to the landowner, or to worry over-much about the detailed practicalities of creating their schemes out of the gasometer and its surrounding land. In practice, achieving the schemes in the form in which they are presented would meet significant difficulties. As shown in the BBC article, in order to function gasometers usually sit in tanks of water, and after getting on for 90 years (a plaque on the structure dates it to 1928), this water is going to be pretty polluted. Pollution will also be affecting the land around, and just taking the steel framework and creating something within it is likely to be a non-starter.

This however in no way invalidates the students' ideas. No-one can expect a completely redundant structure to be maintained just for the sake of it, and the land on which it sits to be effectively left idle, but equally it is reasonable to hope that some new use is found which retains a memory of the former one, rather than just reducing the site to bland uniformity. As suggested in the last Quarterly, Salisbury has already lost a significant part of the diversity of industry and trade it once had, and it would be good if the gasometer site could be seen as an opportunity to develop something which is more than just rows of houses. The scope is there for a project which carries an echo at least of the sculptural quality of the metal framework, and which adds something lively and interesting to the city.

Flooding issues, which have already ruled out more than one housing proposal in this part of Salisbury, may help in pointing attention away from that particular option, which tends to be the default one. The UWE students have shown the sorts of uses which the site could be turned to, given a bit of imagination, and it would be good if something eventually emerges which reflects the range of thinking which has gone into their projects. Salisbury sees too little of what good architects are capable of when given the chance, and here could be an opportunity to turn that situation round.

*Richard Deane.*



This year's Planning Forum will be on Thursday April 16<sup>th</sup>, 6.30pm at the Methodist Church in St Edmunds Church Street as usual, and will cover two topics, both within the general theme of 'localism'. One is assets of community value, a designation set up under the Localism Act of 2011, and aimed at giving some protection to buildings or areas of land whose use is deemed to have a specific value to the surrounding community. The effect of such designation is not to guarantee the use can continue in perpetuity, but to give an opportunity for finding ways of retaining it if it comes under threat. The best-known example locally is Salisbury bus station, which was listed as an asset of community value not long before it closed in January 2014. This gave a six month period of grace, to allow for the possibility of funding being found to retain the bus station in public use. With a report commissioned by the City Council not being able to recommend pursuit of this aim, the listing as an asset ultimately proved fruitless.

The Planning Forum will hear details of the system surrounding assets of community value from Wiltshire Council officer Simon Day, who has responsibility for them, and will be able to discuss whether this is an area with which the Society should become involved. Civic Voice, the national umbrella group for civic societies, is encouraging them to look for potential assets in their area, but we need to make a local decision as to whether this is something we ought to be doing.

The other topic is one which is more obviously within our core area. This is the concept of 'local listing', by which lists are established of buildings which do not meet the standards required to gain nationally listed status, but which are still of some value. This is therefore a matter of aesthetic and historic qualities, rather than use as it is with assets of community value. One of the local Wiltshire Council conservation officers is hoping to produce proposals for a survey of potential locally listable buildings, with which the Society could get involved. It has not so far made any definite commitment towards such a project.

It is hoped to have a speaker from the Hackney Society in London, which has been involved in a very professional project devoted to local listing, in conjunction with its local council. A smaller-scale effort would probably be more realistic locally if things do take off, and any talk would focus on the types of buildings which were added to the Hackney local list, rather than the mechanics of the project there. At the time of going to press, the situation with a possible speaker from Hackney remains open. Either way, there will certainly be a presentation on the local situation, showing examples of Salisbury buildings which are not listed but still deserve protection.

One of the key aims of planning forums is to gauge the views of Society members on current issues, and the meeting will be a good opportunity to express these, particularly on the subject of assets of community value.

*Richard Deane.*



Work being carried out  
on the restoration of the  
Chapter House. This  
work received an  
Award.  
See Pages 5&6.



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR MARCH 2015

My first chance now to wish all members of the Salisbury Civic Society a happy and healthy New Year, even though this Report is published in the spring! May I extend a welcome also to all new members and I look forward to sharing our activities with you. The opening event of 2015, being the New Year Party and **Conservation Awards** Ceremony at The Guildhall, was a great success with the promoters and creators of highly commended architectural and construction achievements being awarded Certificates to acknowledge their contributions to conserving our built heritage.

Mark Elcombe, past Chapter Clerk to Salisbury Cathedral, was the Chairman of the judging panel and introduced the projects undertaken by the successful candidates and our President, Dame Rosemary Spencer, presented the beautifully framed Certificates. Thank you Paul Stevens for preparing them. The Society was honoured by the presence of the Mayor of Salisbury and the Mayor of Wilton along with our other guests

The Lady Radnor Award was most suitably conferred upon The Paragon restoration development on the Wilton Road which the Society has now nominated for the national Civic Awards scheme. The year ahead is again full of the Lectures, Visits (including the Mary Rose), Historic Open Days and other talks and events which will be advised both in the quarterly magazine and direct mail/email prompting messages. I urge all to support these events as many people are hard at work creating ideas and following up with considerable organisation. If you have ideas yourself do please let us have your thoughts and wishes for the Society to follow up.

In my role representing the Civic Society on the Vision Board, I am anxious to create a clear linkage between the current policy of aiming Vision Board efforts and available resources towards the economic development of science and technology businesses and marketing of the Salisbury "Brand" with the many established

Vision Projects which appear to be without direction, let alone funding efforts to enable progress. It is not yet clear how the Wiltshire Council attitudes will assist the maintenance of previous Vision Projects as priorities, but if they are no longer deemed relevant, I believe all concerned should make this policy clear and update the public awareness, so feedback can be encouraged and engaged.

Vision Projects, from past public announcements, include the Maltings/Central Car Park site for retail, residential and leisure development (no action timetable yet); Salt Lane and Brown Street car parks for residential development (no progress to date except possible coach park uses at Brown Street); Churchfields Estate for becoming light commercial and residential uses thus avoiding HGV traffic; Bus Station in Endless Street and Bus Depot in Castle Street for residential and employment uses, but subject to a caveat of suitable relocation of those uses nearby; Eastern Gateway or Southampton Road action area for the improvement of visual and traffic approaches to Salisbury from that direction (no policy actions developed or followed through) and there are many more besides. I hope for clear re-appraisal and thence constant review and engagement with Planners, Land Owners and the wider community which we believe are at least in part represented by the Civic Society.

Finally my thanks on behalf of the Society go to Stephanie Siddons-Deighton and Louise Rendell for their time and efforts in researching the various options and criteria for re-building the Society Website and engaging with many experts in this field so now we are in a position to provide a clear brief to a number of web site developers to quote against and thereafter look forward to seeing the results before too long!

Best wishes

*Peter Dunbar.*





Little Paradise from the east and the modern interior, below. See page 6.





There are finally signs of movement on the long-running story of Sainsbury's proposals for the Southampton Road. The original application was submitted in June 2012 and later on withdrawn, not necessarily because of the weight of public opposition it encountered. A new application, essentially for the same scheme but with road alterations westwards from the store abandoned, was then submitted in March 2014. Given the complexity of the proposal, and the opposition repeated from the first version (including from the Society), it was never going to be decided quickly, but an additional factor delayed the process further. The council decided that with further retail proposals in from Asda and Aldi, they needed to commission a study of the impact of all of them on existing retail provision in the city. That study has now been published, and can be seen among the documentation for the Asda application – No 14/04756. In theory it's also available with the current Sainsbury application (14/03690), but at the time of writing only as an empty shell.

The study is a long and detailed document, luckily with a summary at the end which establishes the chief findings. It assesses the proposals from Sainsbury, Asda (on the London Road near St Thomas's Bridge) and Aldi (much further in on the London Road, not far from the railway bridge with its adjacent allotments), and concludes that the first two would have an unacceptable impact on the retail health of the city centre. It finds that Aldi would also have a somewhat negative impact, but not a big enough one to rule it out.

The immediate result was a recommendation for approval of the Aldi application when it went to the council's Strategic Planning Committee, which deals with applications deemed too significant to be dealt with by the Southern Area Planning Committee. The application has indeed now been approved, though final consent from the Secretary of State is still needed. The Society had objections to it, focused mainly on landscape issues rather than the principle of the supermarket.

The retail study's next impact is likely to be a freeing of the logjam on the Sainsbury edge of town scheme. The study is clear in its conclusion that the effect of this on the retail facilities in the city centre would be unacceptable, and in particular it refers to likely damage to the forthcoming Maltings and central car park redevelopment. Unsurprisingly, the agents for the application are unwilling to take this lying down, and have responded with a document of their own, which can be summarised as 'Bah! Stuff and nonsense!' They dispute the suggestion that Sainsbury could find the extra retail space they need on the Maltings site (Sainsbury have said they are committed to keeping their existing store there open, even if the Southampton Road one goes ahead), saying there simply isn't enough room. And they also dispute the suggestion that the Southampton Road store would jeopardise the success of the forthcoming Maltings scheme, claiming that no viable scheme has yet been put forward, and so there is nothing in the offing which could be subject to damage from a new store on the edge of town. The continuing delay with the pro-

duction of firm proposals for the Maltings, as well as being frustrating, is therefore also being used as an argument for development on the Southampton Road.

The response from Sainsbury's agents also disputes concerns expressed by the Environment Agency about flooding issues on that site. Rather than posting counter-arguments, the council seems to feel that the time has come to finally reach a decision, and provided their retail consultants maintain their position in the face of the challenge from Sainsbury's agents, the application will go to the Strategic Planning Committee, in April or soon after. It is highly likely that it will go with a recommendation for refusal, not least due to the findings of the retail study. It would be a major surprise if councillors ignore such a recommendation, and the general opposition to the scheme, and approve it. It has always seemed strange that so much effort has gone in to pushing something which appeared to stand little chance of success, but maybe the agents are for some reason confident that refusal could be overturned on appeal.

The other surprise is perhaps that Sainsbury have persisted with the proposal when there has been a general drawing back in expansion plans by major supermarket chains. It will be interesting to see whether they really want to push the planning process as far as they can, if the decision is as expected one of refusal.

Meanwhile another proposal has got to planning application stage not far away on the Southampton Road, on a site between the Tesco car park there and the A36. The scheme envisages a 65 bed hotel, for Premier Inn, and a 'drive-thru' restaurant, for McDonalds. Questions as to whether this is a good location for such uses will be at the fore, and the council's Spatial Planning team has already put in a negative view. The general principle relating to such developments is that they must not be allowed to damage the vitality of the city centre, and that sites nearer the centre should be considered before ones further out – this is known as 'sequential testing'. Spatial Planning consider that there are potential hotel sites within the core of the city which should take precedence, referring in particular to existing permissions for a 65 bed budget hotel over a redeveloped Tesco store in Castle Street, and for a 50 bed hotel on the other side of Castle Street, in existing or new buildings running north from the post office. The type of 'boutique' hotel for which the latter permission was gained is radically different from the budget type, while the reference to the Tesco permission raises the question of whether the stalling of supermarket expansion plans will prevent that scheme ever going ahead. So far there are no signs of any movement on it.

The Society has not concerned itself too much with the sequential test side of the budget hotel/restaurant scheme on the Southampton Road, concentrating

instead on the visual aspects of the proposal, which it finds unacceptable. Its letter of objection says that 'The proposed development would simply extend the existing urbanisation of the Avon Valley further eastwards along the A36, well beyond the present 'gateway' formed by the Southampton Road/Bourne Way roundabout'. It goes on to make the point that 'The Southampton Road is the main route into the city from the south east and it is a visual disgrace and embarrassment for such a historic city. This proposal is too big for the site.' The letter also points to the wildlife value of the site, and says that 'In addition to providing a potential wetland habitat and natural feature on the green approach to Salisbury, the site also acts as a natural sump to store flood/groundwater during periods of high rainfall.' An inspection of the area at most times of year will bear out its water-collecting ability.

Unfortunately the Environment Agency has stated that it has no objection to the application, though it also says that, as regards surface water drainage anyway, 'the site is less than one hectare in size (therefore outside our remit)'. It is probably also significant that the council's design adviser refers to changes made in response to earlier concerns voiced at a pre-application consultation stage, which would tend to suggest that the scheme was not felt to fall at the first hurdle. By contrast, the design adviser's response to the Sainsbury scheme nearby just repeats objections made to the earlier version, with no indication of any further discussions. Indeed the fundamental problems thrown up by that application render the details of the design somewhat irrelevant, a position adopted by the Society.

Unlike the Sainsbury proposal, which unless some hitherto unsuspected factor is lurking in the wings seems bound for refusal, the question of what happens to the budget hotel idea seems rather more open. What view is finally taken on the 'sequential test' situation may be critical.

The other edge of town proposal worth a mention is the Asda scheme on the London Road, already referred to as receiving a thumbs-down from the council's retail consultants. The store would be located beside the final roundabout heading out of town before St Thomas's Bridge, which carries the London railway line over the road. The situation is complicated by an existing retail consent, though one that only covers bulky goods, and some development may eventually be inevitable. The Society has rather overlooked this application up to now, but really needs to take a look at it, probably focusing primarily on the visual impact. While not as degraded as the Southampton Road, the London Road approach to the city is hardly a thing of beauty, and the effect of adding a supermarket at this point will need to be carefully scrutinised.

*Richard Deane.*

## **SALISBURY CIVIC SOCIETY OPEN MEETING ON 25 NOVEMBER 2014**

**Speakers:** Dr Gary Mantle, Chief Executive of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust; Steve Maddern, Head of Service Health Improvement for Wiltshire Council; Paul Bramhill, Director of Bramhill Landscape Design and former CEO of parks charity GreenSpace

### **Do we need green spaces?**

The answer to this question was a resounding YES! All three speakers made the case for needing a network of green spaces, including public parks, because of the vital role they play in the creation of healthy places, and there are a host of benefits to our physical and mental wellbeing from getting outside, active and close to nature.

The speakers made reference to the fact that well designed open spaces that delight the eye have long been valued since the gardens of Persian and mediaeval times. The historic context for the Victorian public park movement in cities like Liverpool (Birkenhead Park and Prince's Park) and London (Regent's Park) was touched on and reference made to the tree-lined suburbs of Port Sunlight and Bourneville. These 19th century innovations came out of the need to create places that were beneficial for people's health and wellbeing – where they could find fresh air and respite from the polluted, noisy, disease ridden dense urban areas that had sprung up during this period due to rapid industrialization.

With our busy, internet driven lives our current needs are just as great. Both Dr Gary Mantle and Steve Maddern referred to the health issues - obesity in children is shocking – according to Gary, 'in Wiltshire last year, 1 in 5 children aged 4-5 years were overweight or obese. This figure rose to 1 child in every 3 by year 6 (age 10/11)! Our Health Service is groaning under the weight of the impact of more sedentary life styles and poor diet (not lack of food as in 19th century but too much that is too highly processed); heart disease and type 2 Diabetes. Steve quoted statistics from Wiltshire's 2014 Joint Strategic Assessment, 'over 1/3 of people are overweight or obese.' Furthermore, 'mental illness affects 1 in 6 of the adult population, and 1 in 5 under 16 year olds have a mental disorder.' Fashion and advertising has also had a part to play but so has the way towns and cities have been developed in a piecemeal way, and our increasing dependence on the car.

Gary Mantle shocked us further with powerful evidence of the poor state of nature stating that 'in the UK 60 % of species declining; 10% in danger of disappearing altogether. Wildlife is under attack from every direction ....pollution, habitat destruction, invasive species'. He went on to say, 'In Britain, nature has been squeezed out. At almost every turn, nature has to take second place...we hope that somehow it will be ok if we spray the fields with a variety of toxic chemicals or we destroy habitats to make way for new homes and roads.'

It was distressing to hear that, 'fewer than a quarter of children regularly use their local 'patch of nature', compared to over half of all adults when they were children; fewer than one in ten children regularly play in wild places;





## Open Meeting 2014 - Do we need green spaces?

Regent's Park and Coombe Bissett Down illustrate the necessity of readily available green places for health comfort and pleasure.



compared to almost half a generation ago, and children spend so little time outdoors that they are unfamiliar with some of our commonest wild creatures. According to a 2008 National Trust survey, one in three could not identify a magpie; half could not tell the difference between a bee and a wasp; yet nine out of ten could recognise a Dalek!

Fortunately there is good news too! Although resources are always a problem, we heard about the valuable work of the WWT to create Living Landscapes that offer a sustainable future for wildlife and people through the provision of good quality connected habitat so that people can get close to nature. The Wiltshire Wellbeing Programme uses outdoor activity in nature as a therapeutic measure to support mental health recovery and recovering service personnel, including a range of outdoor activities to help young people to get actively engaged with nature.

Wiltshire Council which took over responsibility for Public Health from the NHS in 2013 is also working to raise awareness of the multifunctionality of green space and landscape, and is recognising the need to work in a more integrated way at all levels to achieve the health benefits that well designed networks of all types of green spaces can deliver.

But what about the state of our parks? Paul challenged us to consider why we do not value them or support those who manage them more highly. He referred to the extreme funding pressure that all urban green space organisations are now under and highlighted the impact of recent Government cuts across 50 authorities with yet more shocking statistics: '28% cuts in parks budgets, 30% losses of green space managers and front line staff and in London 25% of Heads of Parks services have lost their jobs.' Research shows these trends are set to continue. He acknowledged examples of good practice as at Milton Keynes where a charitable trust was set up in the 1992 to take over the public parks in the new town. It was given a large endowment based mainly on various commercial and retail properties in the town to look after some 5000 acres of open space in perpetuity. He referred to examples of other delivery models being used in cities both here in the UK and across the world but felt few were really providing the capability to create longterm sustainable green space/green infrastructure solutions due in large part to the loss of knowledge and skills.

Is there a light on the horizon? Paul was able to tell us about the latest thinking in the UK. The Policy Exchange has been looking at developing new approaches to managing green space and the innovation charity Nesta is exploring new ways to use, manage and make the most of the UK's public parks. Recommendations include changes to giving to make legacies more attractive; the creation of endowments particularly linked to new development and a greater understanding of community managed spaces. Nesta is also funding 11 projects reviewing potential new ideas for funding over the next 18 months including: Endowing Parks for the 21st Century; Sheffield; Manchester; Coastal Parks and Garden Foundation, Bournemouth; My Park Scotland; Edinburgh and Glasgow. Watch this space!.

*Nicola Lipscombe.*

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**General Purposes Committee**

Mr James Woods (Chairman)	lisandjames@gmail.com
Mrs Lis Woods (Secretary)	lisandjames@gmail.com
Mrs Jenni Dougan (Plaques)	jennidougan@hotmail.com
Mrs Judy Howles (Lectures)	howles@ntlworld.com
Mrs Brenda Hunt (Visits)	rogerbren.leach@clara.net
Mr Ronald Smith (Publicity)	dairycottage1@gmail.com
Dr Charles Villiers (Quarterly)	crvilliers@aol.com





The Tollgate pub earned an Award following its rebuilding as a private house this year. To the left is shown its appearance beforehand.

**Development Committee Chairman** – Nominations are sought for this position, to take over from Mrs Judy Payne.

**Publicity Officer** – Nominations are sought for this position, to take over from Mr Ron Smith.

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