

THE EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY

Charity No. 257870



www.eastgrinsteadsociety.org

NEWSLETTER

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Congratulations !

We are sure that all our members will be pleased to hear that our Chairman, Nic Beale, was recently honoured with the Mid Sussex District Council Community Service Award.

Nic moved to East Grinstead in 1978, with his wife, Helen and family whilst working as group Financial Controller for Construction Company Higgs & Hill. His hobbies include walking and travel and he is a keen golfer, having previously played squash and hockey. He became a member of the Society after attending Michael Leppard's Local history Course and was elected Chair in 2012 .

He has a special interest in Planning matters affecting the town and has spent many hours at Planning meetings representing the views of the Society.

We are delighted to have this opportunity to thank Nic for all his hard work on behalf of the Society.

New Members

We are delighted to welcome some new members, Heather Hillman and Sue and Andrew Bass.

If you have any friends or acquaintances, who may be interested in joining, please do not hesitate to put them in touch with our Membership Secretary, Mike Lyons on mike@mikelyons.me.uk

Joan Roberts & Barbara Stovold

Public Telephone Boxes

Society member, Michael Leppard, recently wrote to the committee, raising concern about the poor state of the public telephone boxes in the town. John Bridle has taken up cudgels on behalf of telephone box users and has established a contact with BT, which resulted in the green mould on the inside of the box adjacent to the War Memorial being promptly removed. John suggests that any member who notices a box in a poor state (The one in Mill Way has grass and weeds growing in it!) should email him on jjbridle@btinternet.com and he will try to get something done about it – thank you, John.

Joan Roberts

Annual General Meeting 2015

Our Society President, **Margaret Collins**, welcomed everyone to the meeting and added her congratulations to Nic Beale on his award.

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved and the President then called upon the **Chairman, Nic Beale**, to present his annual report.

Nic began by saying that the Committee has had a busy year, mainly associated with the impact of government legislation on both District and Town Plans, as well as considering local planning applications. He commented that while we have no special status in deciding such matters, we endeavour to make the elected authorities aware of our views to ensure that local residents' voices are heard.

The Draft District Plan has been considered in some detail this year and has yet to be approved. It has had a chequered history and had to be rewritten because it had not considered the District's relationship with adjacent Councils and housing numbers. The **revised draft** makes few specific references to **East Grinstead** and is unsatisfactory because it does not have a policy recognising constraints on development in East Grinstead. However the **additional housing numbers suggested for the Town in the period 2014 – 2031 would seem to be acceptable**, providing the other parts of the District take the housing numbers predicted for them and there does not have to be any reallocation in later years. **Our major concern is the infrastructure deficit** from the previous planning period. The **Jubb Report**, in respect of the road network, which was produced by opponents of the Hill Place Farm Development, confirms this.

The Neighbourhood Plan has also gone into a second version and is all the better for that. We agree with the general thrust of the plan and our comments are more in the nature of detail, rather than fundamental principles. The Society has produced a Register of **Green Spaces**, which we strongly feel should be protected. We have requested that this should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. This Register may be seen on our Website and in hard copy at the Library and the Museum.

When the various comments on the Neighbourhood Plan have been considered and the Plan amended as necessary, it will go for public examination to confirm that it meets the requirements for such a plan and then to a **referendum in early 2016**, for the public to approve it or not. **Once that stage has been reached and the District Plan has been approved, the Town will be less vulnerable to developers.**

The Planning Sub Committee considered 380 applications since the last AGM. These have included **Hill Place Farm**, which was refused but may come back on appeal. There were also several applications affecting the **High Street Conservation Area; The Rose and Crown, the offices of Peerless de Rougemont and Pearsons Bicycle shop and a new build on one of the historic Portlands.** We are pleased to say that the latter has been refused.

We have had our disappointments, in that ten houses will be built on the **green space at the junction of Holtye Road and Blackwell Farm Road.** Over the past year there has been an increase in the conversion of office blocks to flats/apartments. As there is no necessity to provide adequate off-street parking, and further floors have been added to existing buildings, parking problems have increased substantially.

There are some **interesting applications in the pipeline**, with a further plan by **Martells to redevelop part of Queens Walk and move their shop into the Whitehall building on the London Road, a Solar farm on Worsted Farm and more houses at Dunnings Mill.**

Other matters, which remain pending, are the review of the **Controlled Parking Zone restrictions**, which were promised two years ago and the final decision on **Airport Extensions** in the South East. There has been no decision relating to the proposed lease of the **Alfred Wagg Studio, at the Wallis centre, to the Police.**

John Bridle is to be congratulated on obtaining **Listed Status for the War Memorial in the High Street.**

Our **website is performing well, thanks to Andrew Taylor**, who has brought it up to date. We are trying to add current items more regularly, both for our member's benefit and as a contribution to the Town's tourism initiative. The feasibility of putting our Town Trails on the website is being investigated, as this would encourage visitors to use them and also make it easier to amend the Trails, as circumstances change within the town.

Nic thanked the Committee for their support and hard work. John Bridle is relinquishing his secretarial and other tasks but will remain as an invaluable member of the Committee. Our programme Secretary, Shirley King, has agreed to continue for one more year to ease the transfer to a new Programme Secretary, having organised a most interesting series of talks for 2016. We thank her for all the hard work this has entailed.

Nic thanked, our President, for her support and wise council and the other non-committee members for all their sterling work for the Society behind the scenes.

Treasurer's Report

Hon. Treasurer, Mike Lyons, said that he was pleased to confirm that the Society's financial position continues to be healthy. **The balance carried forward is £3738.34, which is £190 more than the previous financial year.** Mike commented that income from subscriptions was slightly up, as there are now 101 paying members. Takings at meetings have increased, due to a good level of attendance and sales of Bulletins by Michael Leppard also contributed to the income.

Included in the expenditure total was some of the legacy fund spent updating and restructuring the website. Costs on talks were lower, as four speakers did not ask for fees. Sundries included a one off purchase of a notice board, for use at meetings, the May Fair and other occasions requiring Society publicity.

The executive committee had decided to increase the entrance charge to £3.00 for visitors, as a reasonable amount to pay for talks of interest to visitors. This is in line with the charges of other societies.

In conclusion, Mike thanked Chris McCory for his expert services as accounts examiner and as he was prepared to continue in 2015/16, it was resolved that he be reappointed for this coming year. It was also proposed and resolved that the Treasurer's report be adopted.

In view of the satisfactory reserve balance, it was resolved to retain the subscription cost at their current level of £10.00 per annum.

A motion that Mr Nic Beale, Mr Richard Maynard and Mr Mike Lyons be elected as **Chairman, Vice Chairman and Hon. Treasurer**, respectively, was carried unanimously. No nominations were received for the post of Secretary.

Mrs Frances Hawke had indicated her willingness to stand for election to the Committee. The motion that Mr John Bridle, Mrs Frances Hawke, Mrs Shirley King, Mrs Joan Roberts and Mrs Barbara Stovold be elected to the **Committee** was also carried unanimously.

Under **Any Other Business** Margaret Collins reported that a letter from **MSDC refusing, on grounds of cramped space, the redevelopment of the Wallis Centre site to house eight dwellings, had been sent to WSCC. A wide ranging discussion was held on the proposal to build a solar farm on 45 acres in the Worsted Farm area.** Comments were made for and against the proposal, including opposition on aesthetic grounds, being in the AONB and within the strategic gap. On the other hand, the scheme would provide cheaper electricity; solar panels would be preferable to housing and solar panels would have a less adverse effect on flora and fauna.

New Developments at East Grinstead Museum An illustrated talk by Dorothy Hatswell

Dorothy explained that the Wellcome Trust had unfortunately turned down the Museum's bid for funds for an extension to the building to house the equipment used by Sir Archibald McIndoe and his team to treat burnt servicemen in World War II. Since extra space would not be available by extending the building, the Museum Trustees had decided to recreate the original operating theatre and place other artefacts within the area currently used for temporary exhibits.

During her most interesting talk, Dorothy showed us the original Emergency Committee Minute page, noting Sir Archibald's appointment to head the maxillo facial unit of the QVH with effect from the 3rd September 1939. His great achievement was in not only bringing together earlier research in the treatment of burns, including the use of salt water treatment and grafting from one part of the body to another but most importantly in giving his patients faith that the treatment would work.

Sir Archibald's genius was in combining ground-breaking medical work with his ability to lift the morale of his patients by encouraging their acceptance by local residents, who in many cases would meet them socially during the, often lengthy, treatment. East Grinstead became known as the 'town which didn't stare'.

Dorothy concluded her talk by saying that significant funds would be required to accommodate the McIndoe museum items, including an original operating trolley. Sponsors are being sought, but contributions by Society members to the '500 Club' and in other ways, would be most appreciated.

On behalf of Society members, our President thanked Dorothy Hatswell for her interesting talk.

John Bridle

Continuing the Museum theme we are happy to print the experiences of a new Museum Trustee, Frances Davis:

It is an exciting time to be involved with East Grinstead museum and I am pleased to be one of the new Trustees, who can support the Museum and its future plans. Having grown up in the town, I was naturally interested when I saw the advertisement for new Trustees.

It came at the right time for me, as I have more than fifteen years' experience in the museum sector and had recently been looking for ways in which to share my knowledge and skills. During my career, I have worked in most areas of museum practice, although I have a particular interest in collections, audience development and education.

I started my career working for the Royal Pavilion and Museums in Brighton & Hove, working mainly at the Hove Museum and Art Gallery. I really enjoyed being part of a small team, as it was a great way to learn, especially when the Museum secured funding and went through an extensive refurbishment in 2001. After 6 years, I left Hove for the greater challenge of managing Eastbourne Museums, which involved overseeing Eastbourne Borough Council's local history activity and running the impressive early 19th century brick fortress, which is the Redoubt Fortress and Military Museum. After nearly ten years managing the building, collections and staff, it was time to move on and I now work on a freelance basis across the South East. My biggest project, at the moment, is managing the delivery of a major new First World War Exhibition at Whitgift School in South Croydon, called 'Remembering 1916 – Life on the Western Front' (www.remembering1916.co.uk)

Since joining the Trustees of East Grinstead Museum, I have been made to feel very welcome and it is great to get to know everyone and to see how they are putting their skills and experience to use in supporting the Museum. I am keen to be involved and, in addition to my Trustee responsibilities, I am leading the Museum's Audience Development team and assisting in writing funding applications. I am also part of the working group, which is developing the vision for the 'Rebuilding Bodies & Souls' project to provide a permanent home to tell the story of Sir Archibald McIndoe and the Guinea Pig Club.

The future is bright for East Grinstead Museum and I look forward to being part of it.

Frances Davis

East Grinstead High Street War Memorial

East Grinstead Society applied to Historic England in April of this year to have the High Street War Memorial listed. We are pleased to report that the designation, as a Listed Building Grade II was granted in June 2015. The designation appears on Historic England's website listing, along with 90 others in and around the East Grinstead area.

"Historic England gave the following reasons for their designation decision:

- Historic interest: as an eloquent witness to the tragic impacts of world events on this community and the sacrifices it made in the conflicts of the 20th century.
- Design/Aesthetic interest: as a well-designed and intact memorial of local materials in its original design and location by the celebrated sculptor Ernest G. Gillick.
- Group Value: for its aesthetic relationship with other Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings and structures, which stand along the High Street of East Grinstead.

Historic England also commented on the good quality of the War Memorial and the additional interest given by the later slab commemorating Private Sidney Godfrey, the first non-commissioned officer to be awarded the Victoria Cross."

John Bridle

Green Spaces

We should like to thank all the Society members for their positive comments and in particular their helpful suggestions of spaces to be added to the Register.

We have made a note of them and will be adding them to the next revision of the List. All additions are most welcome.

Many thanks!

Joan Roberts & Barbara Stovold

MEETINGS 7.30pm, Main Hall, East Court - £1.00/members, £3.00/non-members

Friday 20th November 2015 'The work of the RNLI' by David Coggan

Friday 4th December 2015 'Belgians in Sussex' by Sally White

Tuesday 8th December 2016 * 'The History of the W.I. by Joy Greasley, President of Dormans Evening W.I. *

Friday 19th February 2016 Open Forum – a chance to discuss issues facing East Grinstead followed by a talk by Richard Tyler the Chief Executive of the Q.V.H. Foundation Trust.

Friday 18th March 2016 'The Air Ambulance Service' by Keith Smith

* This is a meeting of the Friends of East Grinstead Museum, but members of the EG Society are welcome to attend. It will be held at the Museum – cost £2.50

Members might also like to know that East Grinstead Museum will be closed from Sunday 13th December, when mince pies will be served to visitors, to Wednesday 13th January 2016.

DISCLAIMER : Unless otherwise stated, any opinions given may be those of their author only.

EXTRA COPIES : Newsletter back issues may be ordered for £1.00 each from Mr M.J. Leppard, 20 St George's Court, East Grinstead, RH19 1QP

NEXT NEWSLETTER : Closing date for contributions for the March 2016 issue – 20th February 2016

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