

THE EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY

Charity No. 257870



www.eastgrinsteadsociety.org

NEWSLETTER

No. 130

April 2019

We are writing this on the first day of Spring and looking forward to the lengthening days and warmer weather. We extend a warm welcome to new members Keith and Susan Hodgson and Phillip Hedges. With a good attendance at the Open Forum meeting, there was no lack of discussion and a variety of topics were aired and are reported below.

Joan Roberts & Barbara Stovold

Did you know...?

- 352 people attended our meetings last year.
- 25 of them were guests.
- The average attendance was 33 members – one third of our whole membership.
- The most popular meeting was in December when Helen Beale spoke about being a volunteer at Standen.
- There are 101 paying members and 7 honorary members.
- A total of 6 people joined the Society in 2018.
- Last year's stall at the May Fair was the most successful ever, raising a record £308.50.
- Members contributed generously by donating tombola prizes and running the stall.

Bad News / Good News

The **Bad News** is that **the Glen Vue Day Care Centre**, which has served East Grinstead so well for many years, is now officially closed. Sadly, in spite of all our objections and demonstrations it closed its doors at the end of March.

The **Good News** is that the building will be taken over by **Age UK East Grinstead from the beginning of May**. The services and facilities at present provided in **Swan Mead** will move across to the more spacious premises of **Glen Vue** and the organisations at present using the building will be able to continue. This is very good news for the **Macular Society**, the **Memory Clinic** and all the other groups, which will be able to carry on using Glen Vue. As Age UK settles down in its new premises, it is hoped that facilities will be developed for those with dementia.

Local County Councillor Jacquie Russell, who has been working to facilitate the move, is hoping that in the future, **dementia care** will be commissioned and **Day Care** return to the premises. There will be a launch event in June, so watch the local press and social media for further news.

Joan Roberts

Open Forum

Nic welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited contributions from the floor.

The first topic raised highlighted changes at **Baldwins Hill School**, where an elderly temporary classroom is to be replaced with a permanent building. Builder's traffic will access the site via the boundary between **Imberhorne and Baldwins Hill Schools** and **concern was expressed about the danger of increased traffic for the children attending the schools**. Work would be carried out between 7.30am – 6.00pm but there would be no deliveries between school opening/closing times.

The question of **damage to the road** was raised and whether it would be reinstated. It was suggested that a schedule of condition should be produced prior to the start of work and that the Council be asked to review the impact of the work.

The plans for **100 houses at* Frith Park, in the Tandridge District Council Neighbourhood Plan**, are causing concern, as new residents would look to East Grinstead for **the provision of schools, surgeries etc.** and these services are already overstretched. **East Grinstead Town Council** is making representation to **Tandridge District Council** concerning this, and the problem of increased traffic.

(* Stop press... Threatened plan for Frith Park refused by Tandridge District Council)

Heavy traffic in **Worsted Lane** is also causing problems at the site of the **Solar Farm**. Large lorries are blocking the road and are not keeping to the working times agreed.

A query was raised as to the proposed development on the site of **Dart Court and Packer Close in Quarry Rise**. There was no news as to the proposals for this site but on a positive note, it was reported that the **new St Luke's Community Hall**, also in this area, **is being used for church services but also for a bold community initiative organised by local volunteers, 'The Quarry Crew'**. This consisted of a Coffee Shop for local residents, on Wednesdays, followed by after school activities for children, which has considerably reduced anti-social behaviour in this area.

The next topic raised was the development at **Queen's Walk**. It was thought that the shops beneath the flats at ground level have been allocated but **the popular existing vegetable stall will have no base from which to operate**. Nic recommended that he approach the **East Grinstead Business Association** for advice and assistance for alternative premises.

There was also uncertainty as to the future of the shops opposite the development and there was agreement that the **South side of Queen's Walk** needed improvement.

East Grinstead Town Council is in favour of the demolition of the arch at the entrance to the Walk and recommends that the **Walk should not be covered. A planning application has been lodged for the construction of flats over Costa/Boots/Edinburgh Woollen Mill.**

It was reported that the recent County Local Committee dealt largely with matters concerning Highways. **Traffic Regulation Orders** were discussed and road schemes are to be rated in order of importance.

Yellow lines are to be put in place in Ship Street and Lowdells Lane later this summer. The problem of **increased road parking around the Queen Victoria Hospital is being considered by local Councillors and Highways officials.**

A West Sussex County Council working group, together with Mid Sussex District Council, Tandridge District Council and Surrey County Council has met and instructed WSP consultants to carry out an assessment of the Felbridge Junction (A22/A264) regarding the cumulative effect of recent and proposed housing developments in the area.

Safety measures have been agreed at the **Oaks development on Imberhorne Lane**, where the lack of a pavement has caused difficulties. The developer is now tackling this problem for pedestrians, although there is currently a dispute, as to the ownership of the verge.

It was reported that the **West Street speed bumps** are not slowing the traffic and a request was made for this to be raised at the next **C.L.C. meeting**

Parking was also reported to be very difficult around **Garland Road, where there is not enough parking for residents**, due to the recent provision of residential apartment blocks. There is a suggestion that Park Road / Garland Road and Grosvenor Crescent may be made one way.

The next topic raised concerned the poor state of the **Queen's Road cemetery**, which is closed for safety reasons. **The access drive , leading to the former chapel, now known as the Belfry, is no longer the responsibility of the Town Council** but the Council has plans to re-open the cemetery and establish a '**Friends of the Cemetery**' group. The badger sett in the cemetery will also need to be dealt with.

Concern was expressed at the loss of **disabled parking space in Sainsbury's Car Park**, as planning permission had been given for a 'Concession Pod' for a dry cleaning company. The Town Council is asking for the position of this 'pod' to be moved from the Blue Badge parking bays.

The topic of the application for planning permission for housing consisting of '**offset rectilinear cuboids**' to the rear of **no 5, The High Street** was raised. Planning permission has not yet been given and the report to Mid Sussex Planning Committee suggests refusal. The Council were being advised that these were inappropriate and anti-social, as they are adjacent to the conservation area.

The problem of the poor state of **St Margaret's Loop**, which is being used as a dumping ground, was raised. This area is partly owned by Sustrans and partly by East Grinstead Town Council. It was suggested that a barrier should be raised on Green Hedges Avenue to prevent dumping and it was agreed that the Society should contact the Town Council to put forward this suggestion.

The work done by the **Disability Access Group** was raised to draw the attention of members to the services offered by the group. (see detailed article in this newsletter)

Nic thanked members for their lively contributions to the discussion, and closed the Open Forum.

Joan Roberts

CARE

Following coffee, **John Monks, Chairman of CARE**, gave a talk about the work of this local charity.

CARE was founded in 1988 by local churches in East Grinstead and Lingfield. **It is a registered charity and has no overheads, no premises and no paid employees.** Costs are covered by donations.

CARE's aim is to provide a service for local residents:

Who need a driver to take them to a medical appointment.
Who need to be driven to visit their next of kin in residential care.
Who like to be taken shopping or for shopping to be done for them.
Who need help with small DIY jobs
Who need help with gardening jobs.

A total of 1027 jobs were undertaken last year by 80 volunteers. Volunteer drivers receive DBS checks free of charge, and are given the choice of area they are happy to drive to e.g. locally or further afield. CARE drives clients as far afield as Brighton Guildford, Tunbridge Wells, Haywards Heath and Redhill. Volunteer drivers are reimbursed for their mileage and have a choice of duties and availability e.g. once a week/ month.

Volunteer Duty Officers are based in their own home and are on duty 9.00am – 5.00pm. The CARE telephone number (01342 410086) is switched through to them to receive home phone requests from clients 9.00pm – 2.00pm. The system is computerised and requests are passed on to volunteer drivers. Training is provided.

John showed slides of grateful clients, with volunteers and said that **CARE is a wonderful opportunity to be 'a good neighbour' and to help local people in need.**

He said that if anyone could possibly help on an occasional basis with transport, shopping, gardening or DIY tasks or would like to learn more about becoming a Duty Officer, please phone the CARE number or **speak to Society members Marjorie Rugg or Margaret Collins, who are CARE volunteers.**

Margaret Collins

Disability Access

(Eddie Harper mentioned the Access Group at the Open Forum. As I thought that this would be of interest to members, I asked him to give us more details of the group, which he has kindly supplied with notes by Cliff Barrow - JR.)

Disability Access was, until 2012, the East Grinstead and District Access Group. It is the towns and wider areas, only representative organisation promoting access rights and associated interests of the disabled and those with mobility problems. It was formed in 1996 by a small group of local, concerned residents and until 2012 had an office in Saddler's Yard, next to the library. When the site was sold by MSDC for redevelopment, the group moved to an **office in the Town Council building at East Court.**

The group concentrates on access issues related to services and facilities and negotiates directly with Public Authorities, including Councils, Transport providers and Commercial premises.

One notable example of this is in relation to access at **East Grinstead Station.** We are engaged with Southern and Network Rail and political representatives, to improve access to the station where one platform is still inaccessible to wheelchairs and people who cannot use the footbridge.

We have continued to work to clarify and improve the situation regarding the provision of **toilets, including for the disabled, in the town and the problem of obstructions and inconsiderate parking on pavements.**

We pursue efforts to improve pavements and dropped curbs, where these are difficult and hazardous for disabled people. We are also in contact with local authorities in relation to the unsatisfactory situation at **Chequer Mead Car Park,** and also the new development in **Turners Hill,** where pedestrian access needs to be considered.

We try to respond to all such matters drawn to our attention by local residents. We also supply regular input to MSDC regarding **planning applications,** where access needs to be considered for the people we represent.

We have a fully developed mobility equipment loan service, and this has been considerably expanded to meet the very active demand in the area. We have about 30 electric mobility scooters and wheelchairs, about 40 manual wheelchairs and other items, such as rollators and walking frames.

Such is the demand, that we have bought about a dozen new lightweight wheelchairs over the last two or three years. These are in particular demand by carers for ease of transport and handling. We receive small donations from the users of the service but otherwise make no charge.

We also support the East Grinstead Visually Impaired (VIP) Readers Group. This is run with the West Sussex Library Service and meets once a month at East Grinstead Library.

The **VIP group** provides social contact and intellectual interest to its members by facilitating lively discussion at the meetings. Disability Access organises and funds **taxi transport** to and from the Group meetings for members. Without the provision of free transport most members would not be able to attend and the group would not continue.

Over the last two years, Disability Access has purchased new equipment for the Group in the form of **small portable players**, which enable a large range of books on memory sticks, downloaded by the library, and obtained from the RNIB, to be enjoyed by the Group.

Cliff Barrow (Disability Access)

A Message from Michael Leppard, one of our Co-Founders :

I very much regret that I have been unable to have a Bulletin ready for circulation with this Newsletter due to my recent move to Stildon Mews. I promise to have one ready for the next Newsletter in November.

I always welcome matters of interest concerning the town from members to add to my research, particularly those who were of school age in the 1930's.

Whole articles are much appreciated from people appropriately qualified to write on their subject from their own studies and research.

I am very content with my move, as I no longer have to deal with the many mundane things of housekeeping. However, I feel that it is very important to remain independent for as long as I can and continue with my work relating to the Town.

It is very gratifying that in its 50th year, the East Grinstead Society continues to flourish and enjoys a reputation beyond its membership. I am sorry that I cannot be more actively involved. The Society continues to mean a great deal to me and is an important part of my life.

Michael Leppard

EAST GRINSTEAD SOCIETY MEETINGS 7.30pm, Main Hall, East Court - £1.00/member, £3.00/non-member

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 J.W. Bridle, 7, Dexter Drive, East Grinstead, RH19 4SU

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