



# Newsletter

July 2013

No 48

## Housing in Rye from now until 2028

In 2006 the newly adopted Rother Local Plan set out the requirement for 217 new homes to be constructed in Rye and Rye Harbour by 2011 to meet the requirements of the South East Plan together with additional homes on smaller, so-called windfall sites.

Four sites were identified for these new homes namely, the Thomas Peacocke School site, the area north of Udimore Road, Harbour Road and Rock Channel. Although the Local Plan only went up to 2011 it did indicate that if these housing numbers were projected forward over the next twenty years, then an additional 5500 houses would be needed in Rother by 2031 and it would be inevitable that Rye would have to provide its share.

In 2012 the basis of planning in England was radically changed by the passing of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which replaced most of the existing planning legislation. The NPPF identified the need for additional housing, stressing the importance of sustainable development and emphasised the need for approved up-to-date plans. This requires all local authorities to develop local plans that are inline with the NPPF and gave them until March 2013 to develop such a plan and have it approved. If a plan was not in place by then the NPPF becomes the criteria by which any development will be judged.

This is the case in Rother as their initial Core Strategy was rejected by the inspector on the grounds that the housing figures were not robust enough. Initially Rother responded by declaring that they would use the figures within the South East Plan but this was abolished in April of this year and they have now had to revise their figures based on the latest population estimates from the government.

This updating exercise has now been completed and the figures approved by Rother for submission to the inspector, who may still not accept them.

For Rye and Rye Harbour, the revised figures show that by 2028 an additional 402 houses will be required. Of these 202 have been completed since 2011 or have been given approval and an additional 53 remain from the 2006 Local Plan allocation.

This means that up to 2028, an additional 147 homes are shown as being required, of which 33 will be small-scale windfall sites.

The three sites identified for development in Rye within the first five years are the Tilling Green school site (currently being used as Tilling Green Community Centre), further development north of the Udimore Road and the council site in Cyprus Place. Beyond 2018 broad locations have been identified for an additional 55 homes in Rye and Rye Harbour.

It will take considerable skill to integrate these homes into Rye but it should be remembered that development was always envisaged beyond 2011 and that, of course, after the 2015 general election the planning landscape may well have changed again.

*Julian Lockett*

## Rye Neighbourhood Plan

Rye Town Council on Monday 15 July agreed terms of reference for the Steering Group that has been formed to drive forward the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Rye – an official document that will form a key element for planning in Rye in coming years.

The Steering Group is chaired by the Mayor Shaun Rogers and comprises other councillors and citizens, including Julian Lockett and Andy Stuart from Rye Conservation Society. The Town Council has agreed that the Plan should focus on Rye parish, and protocols will be drawn up for liaising with the neighbouring parishes as the Plan develops.

The next stage of the process is for the proposal of the planning area being sent to Rother, which

will then offer it for public consultation and, hopefully, sign off.

Then the hard work and further public consultations begin, as the Plan itself is prepared.  
*Andy Stuart*

### **Planning Liaison**

#### Cross Pavement Drains (Secret Gutters)

As previously reported, we are seeking to overturn the County Council's policy that places responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of these drains with the property owner. We have delayed making an official approach pending the outcome of recent legal proceedings following injury to a member of the public due to a damaged drain cover.

The Council has now agreed that it should take responsibility for damage to the drain, which creates a significant precedent. We are writing to the Chief Executive of the County Council requesting a clear statement of policy in the light of such a precedent, and we are optimistic that we will shortly be able to report a favourable outcome.

#### Iron Brackets

We have been attempting to establish who is responsible for the upkeep of these brackets, which were erected by the Chamber of Commerce some years ago to facilitate advertising displays and festive decoration. We have reluctantly concluded that it is probable that the property owner is liable. Some of the brackets are in poor condition, affecting the appearance, and potentially damaging the fabric of buildings, the majority of which are listed. We have made our concerns known to the Chamber and to Rye Town Council, and members with such brackets on their properties should be aware of the problem.

#### Top o' the Hill Public House, Rye Hill

Those members who recently drew attention to the poor condition of this listed building can be assured that the maintenance work that has now started is to be a restoration to its original condition, with like-for-like replacement of windows and materials. Rother planners are monitoring current activities, and they tell us that the pub is hopefully due to re-open at the end of July.

#### Red Telephone Box, Conduit Hill

The condition of this listed telephone box at the bottom of the hill is causing concern, but we understand from Rye Town Council that a new door is being built especially for this box, as the original design is now obsolete.

#### Town Well, Wish Ward

We are still urging Rother to include repair work to this Ancient Monument in the current financial year's schedule, but as yet we have not had such assurance from the Council. In the meantime, the brickwork is being significantly eroded by weeds and the elements.

*John Pope*

### **Rye Highways Forum**

Rye Town Council has set up a Highways Forum, with the purpose of considering (and making recommendations) in relation to any highways-related issues. It will also provide local knowledge and guidance to utility providers, the Highways Authority and Highways Agency in order to help them manage road works and associated closures.

The initial membership comprises Town Councillors and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Rye Bay Marketing and HotCats, plus Rye Conservation Society, with Andrew Bamji being your Society's nominated representative.

East Sussex Highways will be invited to attend every meeting and the Rye Neighbourhood Policing Team will be invited to attend as and when required.

### **Energy Matters**

#### **Rye's Energy Perspective**

Rye has one of the most beautiful built environments in the South of England due in no small part to the wonderful variety of building styles stretching back many hundred years— a major tourist draw and source of economic wealth for the area. Unfortunately these buildings leak energy very easily, indeed many of the timber structures depend on the free circulation of air to keep them condensation and mould-free. This comes at a price – they leak a lot of expensive energy at the same time. Solving the preservation of the fabric at an acceptable cost is now a major challenge even without the national commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 – 80% of our present buildings will, however, still be around in 35 years' time. The problems are already very apparent in the increase of fuel poverty among residents of the town and surrounding villages over the last 18 months.

News about price rises in energy seems to be relentless these days for all sorts of reasons. It's

easy to believe that it's all the fault of the energy companies, remote and unfeeling, concerned only to maximise their profits at the expense of their customers.

Over the last 12 years we have had to increase the amount of energy we import because of the rundown of our gas reserves in the North Sea and the retirement of coal burning power stations because of their emissions – which makes us more dependent on external supplies and more vulnerable to supply shocks. At the same time we are competing for a supply of scarcer resources with more people than ever – hence the pressure on price.

The strategy must, therefore, be to adapt the buildings to meet the new needs of lower energy demand without destroying the old – a major challenge – at the same time increase the proportion of locally generated energy using our abundant local resources of solar energy, biomass, wind and water. It is hoped to develop this as an energy strategy within the nascent Neighbourhood Plan. Both these strands – energy conservation and generation – will lead to changes in the appearance and infrastructure of the town and surrounding area.

Improving the insulation of buildings is an obvious stratagem; at the same time it highlights the problems with older buildings – how exactly to do it to meet both the technical and visual requirements?

Once the loft has been insulated properly, what about the floor, walls, windows and doors? To avoid compromising the external appearance, walls can be insulated internally. Unless this is done very well, however, this can lead to a rise in condensation at the inner surface of the outer wall, with mould and rot following along behind. It's therefore perhaps better to install external wall insulation which unavoidably changes the appearance leading to endless administrative and technical issues.

How about double glazing in old frames which were only designed for a single sheet of glass? And what about the floor? This example shows the scale of the challenge facing us to keep Rye as a viable settlement for at least the next 100 years, preserving the best of the tremendous achievements of the past, doing so at an affordable cost. The Rye Conservation Society has indeed a vital role in this evolutionary process. The Society is indeed well placed to advise and help the process of innovation to meet these challenges.

*Mike Slavin*

## **Day Trip to Folkestone and Hythe, Friday 19 April**

A brisk wind and lowering skies did not make for an auspicious day out, but, yet again, a trip to places that we think we already know well proved to be interesting, informative and, most importantly, highly enjoyable.

The Grand Hotel in Folksone seemed, at first sight, like so many of the Edwardian hotels that proliferate the South Coast, resplendent in their faded grandeur but somehow conscious that their glory days are long gone.

However, all was not what it seemed. After a welcoming coffee, we divided into two groups for a fascinating tour of this tardis-like hotel, with stories about such illustrious guests as Edward VII and Mrs Keppel, the Belgian royal family during the First World War, Agatha Christie and Princess Margaret, not forgetting Michael Caine's debut performance as a child actor.

That the hotel is still a success is in no small part due to the vision (and money) of one man, Michael Stainer, who bought the hotel in the 1970s and has enabled it to prosper. The lunchtime crowd proved it was still very much a focal point and our excellent lunch underlined the fact.

In the afternoon, we moved on to Hythe where, after a welcome at the 18<sup>th</sup> century Town Hall, we again divided into two groups for a tour of the town. The worsening weather restricted us largely to the fine buildings of the High Street and we ended in St Leonard's, one of the most impressive parish churches in Kent. After a most informative talk and a chance to explore the church, we ended the day, appropriately, in the fascinating bonehouse where we were greeted by almost 600 skulls and innumerable other skeletal remains. A humbling end to a fascinating day.

*Irene Jones*

## **Visit from Friends of Lewes**

On Wednesday 12 June, we were glad to welcome eight members of the Friends of Lewes, our sister society from that town. Some of them already knew Rye well, but for others it was a good opportunity to see the many interesting buildings and gardens of Rye on a conducted tour by members of the Society.

The group saw the Rye town model and was fascinated to learn about the history and fascinating development of the town over the ages.



Over lunch at Fletcher's House restaurant, we were able to share experiences of working with local authorities and exchange information about activities and events organised by our two societies and the challenges we both face. We look forward to a return visit to Lewes next year, when we hope to take a group of Rye Conservation Society members with us.  
*Judith O'Connor*

## Events

### Friday 30 August 2013

#### **All day coach visit to Rochester**

Restoration House, coffee on arrival, guided tour of house and garden visit.

Light lunch in the Cathedral Close, followed by tour of city centre with guides from the City of Rochester Society.

***See separate booking form for full details***

**Friday 13 December 2013**

**Annual Gathering/Christmas Party 6-8pm**  
Rye Town Hall

## Membership

The Society would like to welcome Ms R Cigman and Mr M Mark as well as Ms P Earl and Mr S Lester as new members of the Society and look forward to seeing them at forthcoming events and functions.

A reminder to those of you who pay your membership annually – the subscription was due in January, and once again remains at £6 for single or £10 for couples.

If you have yet to pay for 2013 and would like to renew your membership, please send your subscription to:

Andy Stuart,  
Membership Secretary  
Little Orchard House,  
3 West St  
Rye TN31 7ES  
Tel: 07850 877647

Your generous contribution towards the cost of running the society will be, as always, gratefully received.

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Mike Slavin has produced an important introductory note on the problem of heating the buildings of Rye so that they are affordable, retain their appearance but are not put at risk of condensation, dampness and rot. It can be seen and downloaded from the website of the Society [www.ryeconservationsociety.org](http://www.ryeconservationsociety.org) The Society will be developing proposals for Rye and seeking out published advice from other concerned organisations.

