



## ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY

Sunday 3 July

Little Orchard House, 3 West Street, Rye TN31 7ES

2.30 pm – 5 pm

All welcome Admission £5 members (£6 non-members) Children £3 Admission includes Cream Tea

### Landgate

There is no further news on Landgate. Rother are still currently exploring the possibility of finding someone to take the responsibility from them and we are still pursuing the possibility of having it placed on Historic England's Buildings at Risk register.

### Gristmill

We understand that a new planning application will shortly be made for this site. The Executive Committee have seen the initial proposals which meet many of the concerns that we had with the previous refused scheme and we welcome the development of this important site.

### Public Realm

Julian Luckett attended a meeting of Rother's Public Realm Working Party and was able to set out our views on parking, pavements and cobbles, inappropriate adverts and other matters that are so important in keeping Rye attractive.

### Camber Fields

The recent sale, by Rother, of this land has highlighted its importance to the setting of Rye. Whilst any potential development is currently limited by the need for enhanced flood protection, the Society believes that additional protection could be provided by designating the whole or part as a strategic gap, the same protection afforded to the land on the other side of the Rother from Rock Channel.

### When is a development boundary not a development boundary?

It's when Rother discover that they haven't built as many houses as they said they would.

Last October Rother carried out a check on the number of dwellings that had been built since 2011 and looked at how this number related to the figures that were set out in the

adopted 2014 Core Strategy and has discovered that there is a shortfall.

Since April 2013, a sufficient supply of housing sites has been identified. This has been on the basis of a 5% buffer being added (the normal requirement under national policy), which has until recently been endorsed by the Planning Inspectorate on appeal. However, the level of housing completions has continued to be at a low level relative to the district's requirement of 335 dwellings every year.

In February this year when the issue was again tested at a planning appeal, the Inspector found it *'very difficult to conclude from such a poor record of delivery over such a sustained period that the record is other than persistently negative'*, triggering the imposition of a greater buffer, of 20%. This factor alone increases the target and therefore the pressure on developing sites for housing. This means that Rother do not have a 5-year identified housing supply as is required.

Rother's cabinet recently examined the matter and concluded that "The absence of a five-year supply of deliverable sites at the present time means that the development boundaries in the 2006 Local Plan and related restrictions on development in the countryside must be acknowledged as being 'out-of-date' and that "The general presumption in *favour of sustainable development*, becomes a critical reference point when determining planning applications".

To address the issue the cabinet concluded that "it is appropriate to favourably consider sites that accord with the Core Strategy's overall development strategy and are suitable, deliverable and otherwise contribute to sustainable development, *including circumstances where they are not within a development boundary*. Also, officers

will continue to be positive to bring forward approved sites”.

As we know that the concept of what is sustainable is very elastic when required, it is obvious that smaller potential sites on or adjacent to the current 2006 development boundary are now likely to come into play. This approach is likely to be strengthened by a proposed amendment to the NPPF currently before Parliament. The relevant change is for small sites which are for below 10 dwellings. This is, in effect, a presumption in favour of development on small greenfield sites immediately *on or adjacent to* settlement boundaries.

If the policy thrust contained in the Rother cabinet minutes is pursued, supported by the changes to the NPPF then the current development boundary is not sacrosanct and that small sites i.e. below 10 dwellings, that are on or adjacent to the development boundary and that can be shown to be sustainable, will now be favourably considered and actively supported.

It is an approach that could be seen as a *small scale developer's charter* for sites both within and outside the current development boundary.

*Julian Lockett*

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### Highways Forum

All members should be aware that they can report road problems directly through the East Sussex County Council website. This includes problems with pavements, kerbs and traffic control lines (white and yellow). ESCC have revised their contracting process for line painting and this should become more efficient. If reporting fading lines within the Conservation Area reporters should include a note to remind ESCC that yellow lines should be narrow, and Primrose Yellow (this is the “official” colour). The website for this is <https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/contact-us/report-a-problem/report-a-problem-on-a-road-path-or-verge/>

A new layout is proposed for the footpath railway crossing by the River Tillingham. This involves removal of the line crossings, and replacement with a walkway under the railway bridge on the windmill side, and a footbridge on the upstream side of the railway bridge to connect to Gibbet's Marsh. The plans look sensible and will improve safety.

RCS has conducted a survey of all the “secret gutters” in Rye. This was prompted by a member's injury from tripping over a broken gutter. The survey report will be available shortly - we'll keep you posted. The gutters are in various states of repair from excellent to dangerous. There is a risk to the public, but there is also a risk to homes; a blocked gutter may cause significant water penetration and consequent rot or fungal infestation. The responsibility for repair of the gutters lies with the homeowner and the Society will be happy to advise on replacement or repair; gullies in cast iron, though not cheap, are available.

*Andrew Bamji*

### Visit to Canterbury 25 May

We were greeted by three members of the Canterbury Society. Over coffee they spoke of problems with both the City and the County Councils and the Planning Authority's obsession for “square blocks clad with white rendering”. In some ways it was a comfort but also very sad to hear that the City Planners go through the usual consultation processes then ignore the Society's representations.

We split into two groups to be shown around the old City centre (surprisingly compact) to see examples of good and disappointing rebuilding and renovations. Our guides explained that the Council had made several attempts to provide a Ring Road and in anticipation had purchased property, much of which it still owns. As a result of the schemes being abandoned in the 1970s we saw historic older buildings interspersed with either modern new buildings or derelict sites.

There were some good new blocks of flats which fitted well into the street scene and some 'pastiche' developments which were either well received or hated.

The Buttermarket and 41-44 Burgate which were built by the Cathedral between 1449-68 providing shops on the ground floor with lodgings for 58 pilgrims above was destroyed by a huge fire and rebuilt in neo-Tudor style in the Edwardian era. It fitted appropriately with its surroundings.

After an excellent lunch at Café du Soleil housed in a former 18thc wool store very well converted, we made our way to the Beane House of Art and Knowledge for a guided tour of the various sections of the museum including a large display cabinet of Victorian curiosities, an Explorers and Collectors section containing artifacts from Ancient Egypt and those unearthed during rebuilding projects in the city, one of which was the beautiful Canterbury Pendant. Other collections included a memorial to the local regiment, the Buffs, coins, glassware and paintings of people, places and local livestock. We could really have spent a whole day there.

Finally, to the Cathedral for Choral Evensong, which was sung beautifully by the Girls Choir with the Lay Cantor - a fitting and moving experience to end a most interesting and enjoyable day.

*Nicky Frith*

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