

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY

Summer 2015
Number
Eighty Five



NEWSLETTER

www.theharbornesociety.org.uk

HIGH STREET ROLLERCOASTER

Last year's Summer Newsletter optimistically noted signs that High Street was back on the way up as the loss of shops and businesses declined & new enterprises were prepared to invest in Harborne but that trend was not maintained and the High Street rollercoaster is still running as it continues to be confronted by the ups and downs of commercial life.

Over the last year High Street has seen the departure of 'Walters Smith Butchers', 'Phones-4-U', 'Davenport's No.2', 'Pertemps People Development', 'Piri Piri', 'Urban Coffee', 'Gwinnett & Burkill' upon the retirement of the proprietors after thirty six years and 'Acotis' jewellers. The former 'Co-Op Travel' and 'Blockbuster' premises and 'Bainbridge Opticians' old premises have been vacant for well over a year but at the time of writing 'Blockbuster' is "under offer".

On the positive side several existing businesses demonstrated support for Harborne by investing in refurbishments. Last July 'Santander Bank' was remodelled but its reopening brought the closure of its smaller branch opposite; in October 'Greggs' was revamped and reopened



with greater emphasis on takeaway foods; the 'Proverbial' pub reopened in January under the 'Slug & Lettuce' brand and in March 'Pizza Express' underwent a makeover as did 'Arco Lounge' in April.

Happily, new businesses have opened ~ '41 High Street' tea shop last August; 'Paradise Gelateria' ice cream parlour/café in time for Christmas but without jingling bells to announce its arrival whereas 'Butchers Social' pop up restaurant popped up in the former 'Walter Smith' in March as a great way of promoting the opening of its fully fitted out restaurant, work on which has been deferred such has been the success of the pop up restaurant; 'The Merry Cobbler' opened in March; 'Metro Real Estate' took vacant offices opposite the 'Green Man'; 'Harborne Food

School' finally opened in February and most recently 'Co-operative Funeralcare' has opened.

Close to High Street the Lordswood Road area has also seen changes. A.T.E. Turner Electrical at 1 Harborne Park Road opened in the Autumn but had closed by Christmas and is now 'Springfield Lettings'. 'Dolce Gusto' restaurant next to the flourishing 'Boo Boo Coffee' opposite the Swimming Pool closed before Christmas but was replaced in May by the 'Umami' Indian restaurant. In Lonsdale Road 'Havill & Travis' fine art and photography gallery opened last October and 'Organic Everything' has just opened. A little way off in Northfield Road the builders' merchant site re-opened for the same use in October as a branch of E. H. Smith.

The much delayed demolition of Attwood House amazed sightseers who witnessed a giant over £1 million monster with huge jaws biting away chunks of the building. Construction has started and the new larger 'Home Bargains' aims to open by November. Their old premises could be converted to individual retail units. 'Home Bargains' has been a real success since arriving in November 2005 ~ their substantial new investment is a tremendous boost to High Street's prospects.

The biggest threat to High Street's retail future remains the ever increasing internet sales which are growing at a phenomenal rate despite over 30% of customers encountering

delivery problems. Such is the love for online shopping that over Christmas Day and Boxing Day an estimated £1.38 billion was spent online and all that on top of online Cyber Monday's £600 million [1st December]. In 2014 UK shoppers topped £100 billion online.

It is now abundantly clear that the experts were right in saying that high streets as generations have known them as mainly retail centres with many independent shops are at an end. The new "high street experience" is some convenience food stores with specialist retail shops, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, markets, leisure, entertainment, health and beauty as well as banks and other local services.

This is exactly how Harborne has been changing in recent years so that retail premises on the whole of High Street now comprise less than 52% of the 160 commercial, business and other premises.

For fifty five years the health and viability of High Street has been an absolute priority for the Society and will always remain so. We reiterate that, whilst change is inevitable, the challenge continues to be ensuring that changes are for the better, relevant to customers' needs and changing shopping habits in order to create a strong vibrant High Street as a destination that people still want to visit.

Phil Stokes

Chairman's Letter

Dear Harbornite,

Harborne is the suburb of choice for so many of us ~ convenient local shops, a variety of housing, good restaurants, schools, parks, an excellent bus network and close to all the attractions of Birmingham. Over 50 years ago a group of residents formed The Harborne Society with the aim of maintaining a spirit of community and of protecting the village atmosphere against unsuitable development. To this end the Society looks at all local planning applications and our officers attend the Harborne Ward Committee meetings and make constructive comment on matters raised.

We aim to represent the views of all Harborne residents so please join us. The annual subscription is very modest (see back page) and you can make your voice heard. Our website www.theharbornesociety.org.uk will give you more information.

We offer you 3 newsletters a year to inform you on what is happening in Harborne and 8 meetings where even more up-to-date news is shared with members. In addition we have a talk at each of our meetings. In September the new season opens with 'Beatrice Cadbury, the heiress who gave away her fortune'. Do come along as a visitor and see what the Harborne Society is about. You will be most welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Marcia Meyer



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PARKING REVIEW ~ IS THE END IN SIGHT?

In November 2012 following extensive public consultation on the possibility of permit parking in most of central Harborne all 3 Harborne councillors from both major political parties made the lamentable decision to take no further action despite 60% of residents and landlords responding to the consultation supporting the principle. Our Councillors recognised parking was a serious problem yet merely proffered a workshop for residents and businesses to suggest ideas for improving specific parking related issues including road safety.

The shambles that followed was detailed in last year's Summer Newsletter ending with just 8 schemes [the Society submitted 31] emerging at the Ward Committee on 16th June 2014 to go to formal public consultation after the summer holidays. Broadly the schemes included modifications to existing single/double yellow line parking restrictions, adoption of new similar restrictions

and some minor junction modifications. **Thankfully these included proposals for Abbey Road and St. Mary's Road to deal with the serious on-street parking problems arising from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital campus and proposals to deal with issues in Lordswood Road near the Pool & Fitness Centre.**

The formal consultation did not happen. By the 1st September 2014 Ward Committee officers had decided the Council should adhere to its normal two stage procedure with informal consultation aimed at resolving any objections before going to formal consultation on a composite Traffic Regulation Order. If there was support for some but not all schemes only those which were supported would be pursued. Further, the Budget had been reduced to just £36,000 subject to Capital Budget approval in October which became November and thus no prospect of consultation before Christmas.

Officers reported to the 26th January 2015 Ward Committee that informal consultation on the 8 schemes would be undertaken in March but that target slipped with comments required by mid-April. Responses were considered by officers resulting in some amendments being drafted with the aim of reporting to the Ward Committee in June. That meeting was not held as the Council's governance arrangements were being reviewed including the role, if any, of Ward Committees. Incredibly the outcome of that review will not be known until the meeting of the Edgbaston District Committee on 20th July after publication of this Newsletter. This unbelievable dithering has further delayed determination of which schemes will finally go to formal consultation. **Is the end in sight? I will consult Mystic Meg!**

Phil Stokes

VINTAGE TELEPHONE KIOSK

This vintage K6 model telephone kiosk outside the old 'Royalty' cinema was [March] in a very sorry state courtesy of the local intelligentsia yet amazingly the telephone was in working order.

The all red public telephone kiosks have been a familiar part of the British street scene since 1926 although the first standard design kiosk made of concrete was introduced by the G.P.O. in 1921. The iconic K6 "Jubilee Kiosk" was introduced in 1936 and it and its variants were being produced until 1968. The kiosks were cast iron apart from the doors which surprisingly were made of teak. This is the last K6 kiosk in Harborne with four others having been removed a few years ago because of very low usage.

The Society contacted British Telecom resulting in the kiosk being scheduled both for repair and painting. As to repairs it was indicated that being a vintage model the repairer might not have sufficient of the appropriate sized glass panes but they would do what they could in the short term. Repair work followed quickly with some of the 11 missing panes being replaced with the remainder having to be ordered. The door was removed for repair as a glazing bar was missing. Painting is undertaken between March and October and obviously the 2015 schedules had long been determined. If it cannot be painted this year it will be programmed for 2016. Hope we won't be kept "holding on" for too long!



TECHNICAL OFFICER'S REPORT



My Summer 2014 report was entitled "Waiting for Godot - and Others". Progress in the intervening year has been somewhat mixed.

Attwood House has at long last been demolished – thankfully with little disruption to High Street traffic. We await construction and it is now understood that 'Home Bargains' will move in to the new unit, which is some 50% bigger than their existing store. One of the retail successes on the High Street! But, problems have arisen over the public lavatories which were previously accessible off the narrow alleyway next to Attwood House. A condition attached to the planning approval for the project required the developers to provide publically accessible lavatories within the new store. However this requirement was removed in 2013 and the plan is now for the previous lavatory block, which is City Council owned, to be externally refurbished by the developers and remain in situ. I understand that they are unlikely to reopen as the Council does not have sufficient funds. As a result we are left with the worst of both worlds – a closed public lavatory and blocking what was designed as a wide and inviting thoroughfare linking High Street with the car parks behind. I am not sure what the outcome will be.

I am pleased to report some progress on the 'Royalty' Cinema as a consortium of buyers has recently acquired the Grade II Listed Building. It has been made clear that it is a commercial venture. The owners have been asked by the planners to consider and evaluate all possible options and I understand that several suggestions have emerged including a hotel and a "retirement village". We await developments with interest!

In the last twelve months approaching 250 planning applications have been examined by the Society and two in particular have given cause for concern.

Firstly, outline planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of Birmingham Women's Hospital on the Queen Elizabeth site. No one is against improvement of vital medical services but despite significant reservations being voiced by the Society, local councillors and residents, little or no account seems to have been taken of the tremendous "knock on" effect the expansion of the site is having on residential roads in the immediate vicinity. Nose to tail parking and traffic gridlock are now common throughout the day. The planning officer's report included the following: "...the increase in car parking meets the increased level of staffing planned in the Hospital and ... there is sufficient patient/visitor provision in the other public car parks across the site." He is obviously not a Harborne resident! With further development planned (Institute of Translational Medicine, Birmingham Children's Hospital) the already dire situation will only worsen, unless a comprehensive scheme is introduced which must include ways of removing car parking from local roads.

Secondly, a new building at Baskerville School on Fellows Lane has received planning approval despite serious objections from the Society and local residents. The planned building threatens to destroy the amenity of this ancient "holloway" to the detriment of local residents and the school who will all

be dwarfed by an ugly, inappropriate and insensitive block. Reading the planning officer's final report to the Planning Committee it was clear that the application would succeed even in the face of so much local opposition. I must make it clear that the Society is not against the principle of providing a valuable educational facility for children with complex educational needs, or the expansion of car parking on the site, or the proposal to improve the main entrance but the building applied for is simply unacceptable. There had to be a better solution!

I must end on a positive note. I have mentioned the success of 'Home Bargains'. Also notable are the new café 'Forty One The High Street' and the 'Paradise Gelateria' in the former Harborne Market. The 'Butchers Social', despite the Society's initial reservations about the loss of the last High Street butcher, seems to be a great success and - at last - there is progress at the Martineau Centre towards providing much needed family housing for Harborne.

Andy Peet

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CHRISTMAS FESTIVE LIGHTS

The festive lights on High Street over Christmas and New Year were favourably received but they will be the last funded by the City Council for the foreseeable future. The Society was instrumental in securing the return of Christmas lighting to High Street in 2006 and has contributed towards the cost on several occasions.

The lights have been funded by the Ward Committee from the Community Chest but that funding has ended as part of the Council's well publicised serious financial position resulting from major reductions in Government grant since 2010 and which are set to continue until 2017/18. Last Christmas some Ward Committees did not fund festive lighting but thankfully Harborne Ward Committee earmarked £5,000. However, when the costs were known that sum was sufficient only to secure the lighting of 17 of the useable 21 lamp columns between the 'Green Man' and the 'Junction' [the column outside the cottages opposite M&S is not used]. An illuminated Christmas tree would have cost £1,270. At the Society's suggestion the Ward Committee agreed that all 21 columns be used and not having a Christmas tree freed up the lamp column corner of St. John's Road for festive lighting unlike in previous years. Additional funding to meet the full costs was approved.

So what of next Christmas? Happily the Harborne Business Association has agreed to take responsibility for the matter and to raise funding from its members and other businesses. The Society has agreed to donate £100 towards the cost.

HARBORNE POOL & FITNESS CENTRE



Welcome to another update for Harborne Pool & Fitness Centre. The tremendous support from the local community continues and I would like to take another opportunity to thank you personally. I said this last year but again we have had some great results and I feel the need to let you know how much I appreciate the continued support from you all.

Since my last update our name has changed so the Pool & Fitness Centre is now operated by Places for People Leisure and is part of the Places for People Group. We are now a social enterprise and apart from the name change all else remains the same.

We now provide swimming lessons to 1,525 students from 6 months old to over 60 years of age through our swimming instruction programme and this is now one of the largest programmes in Birmingham, rivalled only by pools with far more pool space than us. There is a constant demand from schools to hire more water space but we are almost at capacity now so opportunities are very limited. There have been

almost 361,000 visits to the Pool & Fitness Centre over the last year with 32,000 of these visiting through the City Council's 'Passport to Leisure' and 'Be Active' schemes.

The Belly Flop Splash annual sponsored swim that we host with our partner Cadbury raised over £20,000 this year for ACORNS and we hope the next event will be bigger and even more successful. We hope some of you caught us at the Harborne Carnival. We are always interested in local events and projects so if you are planning either please let me know and we may be able to help out or even provide a complimentary venue for your meeting.

If you are a customer of ours please remember to park considerately and safely in the surrounding area, best of all just walk!

**Pete Wallage,
General Manager**



F.J. DAWSON

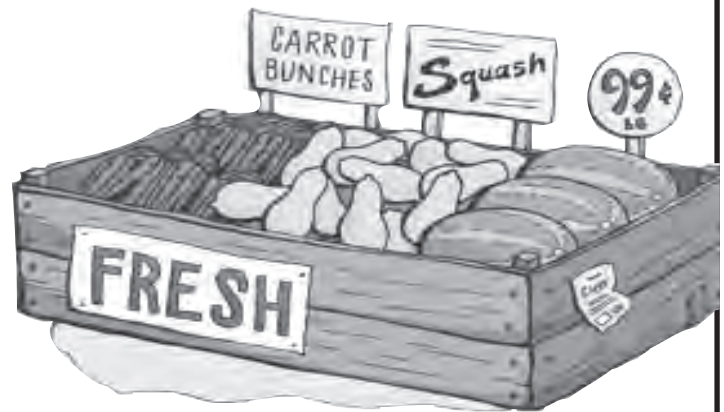
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FARMERS MARKET NOW TWICE A MONTH

With the recession many farmers' markets have declined but Harborne remains successful. Sketts, the market operator, with the agreement of Harborne Retailers' Management Company who control this part of the High Street forecourt, held two markets a month for a trial period from February to May following which they reviewed the matter and are continuing with the additional market on the fourth Saturday of every month pending confirmation by the Management Company.



SPEEDING DRIVERS WATCH OUT!

Recently published figures for 2014 revealed that Lordswood Road and Harborne Park Road were in the top 30 roads/Motorways in the West Midlands for speeding offences. In 2013 the Police switched off all their fixed camera sites to save money but have continued using mobile camera vans where speeding



is an issue. The only static camera enforcement sites are on Motorways and operated by the Highways Agency. Of the top 30 mobile camera sites in the West Midlands Lordswood Road in both directions between the 'Kings Head' and the Court Oak Road island [24th & 27th on the list] saw 1,203 speeding offences and Harborne Park Road between Old Church Road and St. Mary's Road [30th] saw 471 offences. You have been warned!

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REVIEW OF CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS & WARDS

As a consequence of the 'Trojan Horse' allegations about schools in the city, Eric Pickles, then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and Councillor Sir Albert Bore, Leader of the City Council, agreed last July that an independent review of the "governance and organisational capabilities of the City Council" be undertaken. Sir [now Lord] Robert Kerslake, then Permanent Secretary at Mr. Pickles' own Department, led the review.

The review report was published in December. Recommendations included the number of councillors being reduced from 120 to 100, or less, with the existing 40 Wards being replaced by smaller Wards with just one councillor. In addition, the current basis of elections being held for one third of councillors in three years out of four should be changed to all out elections of the whole Council every four years.

Without consulting the citizens of Birmingham the Secretary of State laid an Order before

Parliament directing that the Council must hold whole Council elections from May 2017, subsequently changed to May 2018. The Order also requested the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to conduct an electoral review firstly to determine the total number of councillors and subsequently the number of Wards and their boundaries. There could be a mix of Wards having 1, 2 or 3 councillors.

The Commission's view as to the number of councillors was expected 21st July after the deadline for this Newsletter. The decision as to the number of Wards and their boundaries will take longer and is not expected until April 2016 with the public invited to submit ideas for boundaries which reflect community interests and identities.

The existing Harborne Ward boundary is ridiculous with large parts of the north and west of the historic and natural suburb of Harborne being in Quinton Ward whilst a large area north of Hagley Road and well down City Road in

Edgbaston and Rotton Park is in Harborne Ward despite not having the remotest historic relationship with, or relevance to, Harborne. This is the result of previous reviews by the Boundary Commission and its predecessor. Given the Commission's track record the Society is fearful of the outcome of the current review so far as Harborne is concerned.

Phil Stokes





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With the increasing awareness of the benefit of upcycling in the charity world we are pleased to sponsor the exhibition 'It's all about Hens' at Frametec, Greenfield Road from the 14th August 2015. I hope to see you there

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YORK STREET CAR PARK

A reminder that the City Council Car Park only levies charges between 8a.m. and 6p.m. Mondays to Saturdays so that parking is free to all evening visitors to High Street.

Furthermore, the Car Park is totally free of charge on Sundays, Christmas Day and every Bank Holiday and Disabled Badge holders have free parking at all times. It is the only pay & display car park in Harborne to offer 1 hour parking which costs just 40p and has been at this level for several years.

HARBORNE GOOSEBERRY GROWERS' SOCIETY

The 2013 Summer Newsletter reported on the silver plated cup generously donated to the Society by Margaret and John Simmons and inscribed "Harborne Gooseberry Show 1883 Presented by A.G. Seal". It was hoped to include an article on the Gooseberry Growers' Society in the 2014 Summer Newsletter but that was precluded by a shortage of space. Happily we now do so with **great thanks to Wendy Carter from Harborne Library for the following article.** The cup is on display on the first floor at the Library.

During the nineteenth century the humble gooseberry surged in popularity. Cultivated in gardens since at least the sixteenth century, the challenge of growing a berry of superior size and quality was taken up with such enthusiasm during these years that in 1845 one hundred and seventy one 'Gooseberry Shows' were registered by local growers' societies. These societies were most prevalent in Cheshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Midlands. The few remaining today chiefly survive in the Cheshire area.

It was in 1814 that the then small Staffordshire village of Harborne held its first Gooseberry Show. The success of this led the following year to the founding of the Harborne Gooseberry Growers' Society by schoolmaster Thomas Baker and young enthusiast James Barton, a spectacle maker. Meetings were held at the 'Green Man' Inn, on the site of the present 1930's building, and remained the home of the Society almost without interruption until its eventual demise in the early decades of the 20th century.



c1910 Emmanuel Withers is standing third from the right in the middle row

Gooseberries are weighed in pennyweights (dwt) and grains (grs). In 1875 the over 80 year old James Barton grew the largest berry 'in all England' for that year. It was of the variety 'Bobby', a popular choice for competition fruit. His berry weighed in at 34 dwt and 20 grs [about 1.91 ounces]. Even if this weight was later equalled it may not have been easily beaten, for the final verse of 'The Gooseberry Growers' Song' (published 1885) reads ~

**Here's a health unto the Bobby,
the conqueror of this land,
Soon we may raise another sort
against him for to stand;
So toss about the bowl my boys,
and merry let us sing,
All honour to his 34-20, and
God Save the Queen.**

Another spectacle maker, Emmanuel Withers, was to become one of the best remembered of Harborne's gooseberry growers. Tom Presterne, in his book 'Harborne Once Upon a Time' published in 1913 wrote an account of his achievements which displayed a deep respect for the man - 'he did not waste his time and quarrel with Dame Fortune. He worked'. His industrious nature had enabled him to retire at the age of fifty and to devote his time to growing gooseberries cultivated on an allotment known as Waterloo Gardens situated to the rear of properties that he had built in Metchley Lane. Berries would be carefully tended and jealously guarded. A dressing of dried pigeon manure, an application of sugar solution to the skin of the berry, or even an umbrella to protect against the worst of the elements.

In 1901 Withers competed in a competition against all comers at the 'Falcon Hotel' in Stone, Staffordshire. Stone were confident of retaining their Premier Prize which they had successfully defended for over forty years. A local paper referred to 'the consternation' felt by Stone when 'foreigners' and in particular Mr. Emmanuel Withers of Harborne, snatched their prizes from them. Of the seventeen prizes in competition, Withers secured sixteen including the coveted 'Premier Berry'. A little later that year he again swept the board at the Gooseberry Show at the 'Green Man' in Harborne, winning the Premier prize with a giant 'Transparent' weighing 28 dwt [about 1.54 ounces]. His berries dominated almost every class and only slipped to second and third placing in two classes.

Presterne describes how in 1903 a display of Emmanuel Withers' prize winning berries



in a seedsman's shop window on High Street became a local attraction - admirers even striking matches to gain a glimpse of the show after closing time. Withers died in 1923, having in his later years turned to the cultivation of chrysanthemums.

Although surviving the years of the First World War, the demise of the Gooseberry Growers' Society began in the ensuing years. European gooseberries became victim to the American mildew fungus in the early 20th century but also, in the wake of the war years, there was a fresh enthusiasm for embracing all things 'modern' and perhaps a little less interest in the traditional village pursuits.

Wendy Carter



The Green Man c1910

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HIGH STREET, HARBORNE.

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HARBORNE RENTED PROPERTY MARKET

With 25 estate/letting agents now operating in the suburb of Harborne as a whole it is clear that Harborne continues to be seen as a very desirable place to live. Long standing local estate agents Dixons have provided the following update on their view of the state of the ever expanding rented housing market.

The residential lettings market is extremely buoyant and rental prices are increasing which is a welcome relief for investor landlords and those accidental landlords who are beginning to see a solid return on their properties. Properties let through Dixons for April last year were at an average of £742 per calendar month, with a steep jump this year to an average of £867.

With the London market flat lining, we are seeing a vast amount of property investment heavily in Birmingham and the surrounding areas where rental yields are above average, causing a much anticipated boom in the sales market and properties being snapped up. Investors are seeing a 'two for one' mentality in Birmingham versus London prices and Harborne has a far reaching desirable reputation reining them in.

As rental prices continue to increase along with mortgage lenders offering superb new rates, it is becoming more and more appealing for homeowners to keep their existing properties and being able to fund their next move. By being able to do this, property is rapidly being people's choice of investment to ease the worries of supplementing income, funding retirement or being able to leave something to loved ones.

The standard of rental properties has risen over recent years, in part due to landlords understanding that tenants will pay a premium for good quality properties in good locations. Harborne being so desirable means that we see any excellent standard of property causing

several applications from high quality tenants. By maintaining properties at high standards, this goes hand in hand with the type of tenant the area will attract, and encourage tenants to buy in to making it their home and into the local community.

In order for a lucrative and rewarding property venture, it is important to seek advice from an experienced agent who can assist with financial advice, buying, selling, letting and property management. We would welcome anyone to come and talk to us for more information.

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PARKING & THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL CAMPUS

For some time the Society has at every opportunity pressed for the issue of parking for staff and visitors to the whole of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital site together with traffic management to be considered holistically in the light of future developments on the campus.

On-street parking by staff and visitors to the ever increasing facilities on the campus continues to cause problems for residents in the immediate vicinity despite more parking restrictions being introduced. Our concerns are that further significant developments on the site are already in hand [e.g. Institute of Translational Medicine] or are planned in the next few years despite the existing infrastructure clearly being unable to cope with current demands. The Children’s Hospital is intending to merge with the Women’s Hospital and relocate to the site c2022.

The final Planning Approval for the QE Hospital only required 3,860 parking spaces, 240 less than in the Outline Approval. The actual number provided, as reported to the Ward Committee last September, is 3,812 of which 2,675 are for staff [which exceeds 8,500]. The Hospital



states it will not provide any extra on-site parking.

In January an Outline Planning Application was submitted for ‘Project VITA’ the major development of the Women’s Hospital with a new clinical block and the refurbishment of part of the current building by 2019 with an increase [97] in staff to 1,600. The public consultation document included the following statement ~

“It has been universally accepted that the parking and traffic flow of the whole site is not working – for anyone. As part of the project, plans include additional space for parking. Project VITA is an ideal opportunity to find a long term solution for patients, visitors, staff and residents.”

The Women’s Hospital has failed on every count! The “new” Hospital

will have 586 parking spaces for staff, an increase of 54 spaces, but this has been achieved by deleting the 46 space car park for Patients/Visitors whilst creating 8 disabled parking spaces. **So, despite its major increase in services and the number of births each year the Women’s Hospital plan just 8 additional parking spaces overall. So much for a long term solution!** Patients/visitors will have to use the shared visitor car parks on the QE campus

Both Hospitals are placing faith in their Green Travel Plans to improve parking and traffic problems around the campus. In February the Planning Committee finally recognised that the QE’s Plan was not sufficient to resolve the on-street parking problems blighting local roads and refused to endorse the Travel Plan telling the QE to try harder. It was hoped this view would extend to the Committee’s consideration of the Women’s Hospital planning application. Alas our hopes were not fulfilled and the Committee, despite criticising the lack of additional parking, approved the application whilst calling for a comprehensive parking and transport review.

Phil Stokes



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HARBORNE WAR MEMORIAL

The report in last year's Summer Newsletter about the successful restoration of the War Memorial in St. Peter's Churchyard referred to the fact that the names of the 20 Harbornites killed in the Second World War had never been added to the Memorial. As there was space to add their names to the plinth the Parochial Church Council agreed that this be done. The cost of the stonemason to engrave the names is £3,750 and a 50% grant was secured from the War Memorials Trust leaving £1,875 to be raised locally. A public appeal was launched and the Society, having donated £500 to the restoration, donated £250 towards the additional work.

The Church is well on the way to raising the necessary funds and the work is soon to be put in hand and will be completed in time for Remembrance Sunday.



THE SCHOOL YARD UPDATE



The commercial element of The School Yard scheme with the renovation of the Grade II Listed former school building has deservedly received a Birmingham Civic Society 2014 Renaissance Award in recognition of EDG Property fully embracing the heritage of the original building whilst bringing it back into modern and vibrant uses. Phase 1 of the development, launched in December 2013, was sold by the developer last November to Avignon Capital. 'Urban Coffee Company' the first tenants of the food hub unfortunately closed in February just sixteen months after opening but happily 'The Harborne Food School' opened in February with an official launch by Hugh Fearnley-

Whittingstall in March. The residential development at the rear of the site which remains in EDG Property's ownership is set for completion in November and all 13 properties have been sold/reserved off-plan.

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THE 'HUNTSMAN' PUBLIC HOUSE

The 'Huntsman', better known as the 'Kings Arms', had been derelict since being destroyed by fire in July 2013 just days after its reopening. Following the fire the Council served Notices under the Building Act 1984 requiring the owners to reduce the roof and certain brickwork. Subsequent Notices dealt with loose material and brickwork due to weathering.

Late on Wednesday 14th January gale force winds blew down a chimney breast which collapsed onto the High Street elevation bringing down substantial debris. The Council immediately imposed emergency road closures on High Street between the pub and Ravenhurst Road and on Harborne Park Road between the pub and St. Peter's Road. Notices were served requiring the height of the building to be reduced to first floor level plus some internal works which started early on the following Friday. The road closures caused major traffic problems but by Saturday morning the carriageways into



Harborne and towards Selly Oak were opened. The safety work was completed by the end of Thursday [22nd] and the scaffold removed next day with the roads fully opened.

The Council continues to monitor the site to ensure it remains safe and secure. It is a total eyesore but criticisms blaming the Council are misplaced as it does not have power to compel the owners to do anything other than ensure public safety which has been done. This site has played a very significant

role in Harborne's history but its future is in the hands of the owners and the planners when the existing, or potential new, owners come up with proposals.

Phil Stokes

EDGBASTON DISTRICT OFFICE

The Edgbaston District [formerly Constituency] Office at Harborne West, 326 High Street opposite Pinner Court, closed on Friday 19th June and relocated to somewhere in the Council Extension in Margaret Street. Apparently the lease of the accommodation was due to expire. The Council could not be bothered to inform people or organisations having regular contact with the District Office nor was a notice informing the public put up at the entrance to Harborne West.

The establishment of constituency offices in 2004 was touted as the start or real devolution and the press even branded them as 'mini town halls' but it was a false dawn and fairly quickly the 'd' word disappeared from the Council's vocabulary. In recent years staffing has been slashed to a team of just 4 now based in the city centre [Ladywood Constituency].

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NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Harborne is one of the safest places to live in Birmingham, thanks in part to the work of your local Police Neighbourhood Team. What do they do day-to-day? Hopefully this article will answer some of your questions.

Harborne Neighbourhood Team is made up of a Sergeant, 3 Police Officers and 5 PCSO's: Sergeant Amar Khalil, PC Jim Taylor, PC Jack Regan, PC Sherry Lea, PCSO Charlotte Alcock, PCSO Marc Pearson, PCSO Jeffrey Such, PCSO Ian Lowe and PCSO Sue Dufficy. They work shifts that range from 8 am until Midnight. I manage the team and make sure that all priorities are met expeditiously and all the officers have particular areas of business.

PC Jim Taylor oversees hostels on Hagley Road and manages offenders at these locations. He collates intelligence and where necessary obtains a warrant to target offender's home addresses.

PC Jack Regan oversees one of the crime priorities – Vehicle crime and our main community issue of Anti-Social Behaviour. He is supported by PCSO Sue Dufficy who follows up on ASB calls to ensure they are dealt with in the best way possible and that victims are offered or signposted to additional support. She also patrols the Metchley Drive estate.

PC Sherry Lea oversees Child Sexual Exploitation liaising

with local children's homes, ensures that Domestic Abuse victims are properly safeguarded from offenders and also offers Restorative Justice (not dissimilar to mediation).

PCSO Ian Lowe oversees one of the main crime issues of Burglary. He also manages our twitter account @Harborne NHT with regular updates to let the community know what we are doing in addition to our everyday tasks. He is also responsible for patrolling the North of Harborne Ward.

PCSO Marc Pearson oversees the schools in the Ward working closely with pupils and head teachers to reduce the potential risk of some pupils becoming offenders. He ensures they are sign posted to agencies that can offer the right support and also tries to educate pupils of the risks of offending or potentially life threatening situations.

PCSO Jeff Such is the dedicated officer working on High Street to tackle business crime, in particular preventing shop theft, anti-social behaviour and pickpocketing. He oversees Pubwatch (preventing offenders entering pubs to sell stolen goods or behave violently). He also liaises with the Harborne Business Association.

PCSO Charlotte Alcock liaises with the Safer Estates Group to

ensure households involved in nuisance and anti-social behaviour are made a priority and that all agencies take responsibility to tackle the issues. She is also responsible for the Moor Pool Estate.

Our main priorities are Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Abuse, Burglary and Vehicle crime. We also try to tackle parking and speeding issues, which is a community priority. We are frontline, so we do deal with a range of calls from the public including emergencies. Every day we patrol specific locations at specific times to tackle any crime trends. We have a range of sanctions we can use such as: Criminal Behaviour Orders, Good Neighbour agreements, Restorative Justice and Community Resolutions, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Penalty Notices for Disorder as well as good old arrests!

If you would like to do your bit why not set up a Neighbourhood Watch, become a lay person/ appropriate adult or attend the local PACT meetings to have your say? To know more about crime in Harborne please go to the 'YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD' website where you can see the locations and offences.

Sergeant Amar Khalil



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*Douglas Deal includes Energy performance certificate, For Sale Board, Property particulars and internet and newspaper advertising.

HERITAGE GUIDED WALK ~ SUNDAY 13th SEPTEMBER

The Society will again be participating in the national Heritage Open Days with another of Edward Chitham's popular guided walks. This year's walk will be shorter than usual and focus exclusively on High Street. Consequently the walk will not be a circular tour but will start at the 'Green Man' and finish at Prince's Corner/former 'Duke of York'.

The walk will take place on Sunday 13th September starting at 2 p.m. Being a Sunday there is free parking at the City Council's York Street Car Park. The walk will take place whatever the weather so be prepared for the worst! No charge. Everyone welcome.



REPORT OF THE A.G.M.

The 55th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 13th May, 2015.

Reports from the Chairman, Technical Officer and Honorary Treasurer demonstrated the high level of activity during the year on behalf of Society members and the wider local community.

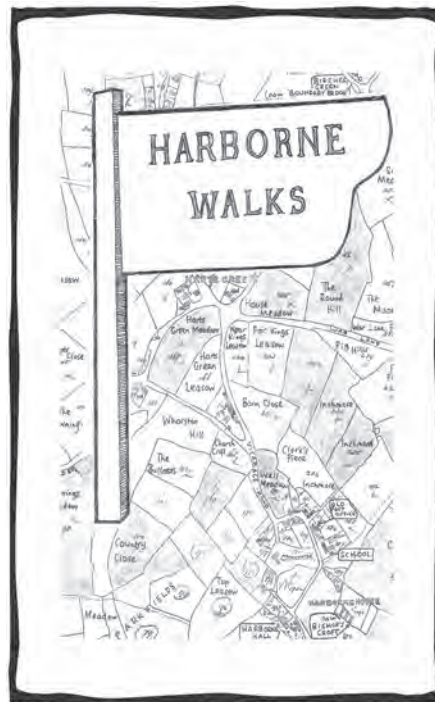
For the last year the overriding issues had been the Society's continued major involvement in the Harborne Parking Review and a review of the Society and its Constitution. However, they were not at the expense of other issues, in particular a number of significant planning applications and enforcement issues, the Attwood House development, the former 'Royalty' cinema, the worsening on-street parking problems arising from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital campus and the proposed development at the Women's Hospital. Membership had been maintained and the Society continued to be in a sound financial position.

Proposed changes to the Constitution were approved. During the year Ray Le Gallais left the Committee but the remaining nine Committee members sought re-election and were duly appointed together with Peter Lowndes and Tony Whateley.

Phil Stokes
Honorary Secretary

HARBORNE WALKS BOOKLET

By popular demand the Harborne Society has published a booklet of a selection of our Heritage Open Day's Walks round Harborne.



This most informative publication, illustrated with photographs and maps, was put together for The Society by Edward Chitham, historian and writer and our guide on the Heritage Walks.

You may purchase it at any Society Meeting or at Harborne Library. The cost is £2.50. Alternatively if you would like to have a copy posted please contact Phil Stokes Harborne Society Secretary who will arrange postage and packing at £4.50. Cheques payable to 'The Harborne Society'.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

2015-2016

Patron

The Lord Bishop of Birmingham

President

Mary Abbott

Chairman

Marcia Meyer,

17 St. Mary's Road, B17 0EY.

427 4356

Vice-Chairman

Roger Miles,

21 Oaklands Avenue, B17 9TU

426 2577

Honorary Secretary

Phil Stokes,

4A Queen's Park Road, B32 2LA.

426 1289

Honorary Treasurer

Brenda Durbin,

28 Hart's Green Road, B17 9TY.

427 3170

Membership Secretary

Jenny Buchan,

50 Margaret Grove, B17 9JL.

426 4854

Technical Officer/Chairman

Technical Sub-Committee

Andrew Peet,

14 Milford Road, B17 9RL.

427 7923

Committee Members

Michael Darby

Peter Lowndes

Linsay Smith

Bill Taylor

Tony Whateley

Our e-mail address is

harbornesociety@hotmail.com

WELCOME

We extend a welcome to new members

Joanne Connop, William Waldron,

Charles Harry, Mike & Lesley Parry,

Helen Chambers and Robert Hickman.

Society Programme of Meetings 2015-2016

All meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m. in the smaller hall at St Mary's Parish Centre, Vivian Road. The entrance is the second door on the right along the drive to the car park. Additional parking in the school playground.

2015

Wednesday 9th September

Beatrice – the Cadbury heiress who gave away her fortune

Fiona Joseph

Sunday 13th September

Guided Walk – Harborne High Street

Edward Chitham

Meet at the 'Green Man' public house at 2 p.m.

Wednesday 7th October

The Chamberlains and Churchills

Roger Ward

Wednesday 4th November

Newman Brothers Coffin Works in the Jewellery Quarter

Dave and Pam Humphries

Wednesday 2nd December

The Extraordinary Vesta Tilley

Ray Sturdy

2016

Wednesday 3th February

Quakers and the Friends Ambulance Unit in World War 1

Betty Hagglund

Wednesday 2nd March

Victorian and Edwardian Buildings of Birmingham and the Black Country

Tim Bridges

Wednesday 6th April

Secrets of Wildlife Photography

Nick Martin

Wednesday 11th May

Annual General Meeting

The Harborne Society Speakers' Meetings are free to members but anyone is most welcome to attend.

We charge non-members £1 which includes refreshments.

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY

Are you interested in Harborne? Do you value the area and community?

Would you like to keep in touch with issues and developments? By joining **The Harborne Society** you will be kept informed about all the issues that relate to **Harborne**

You will receive three Newsletters a year and we inform members of important news at our regular meetings

Annual subscription Rates are ~ Individuals £5

Two or more persons living at the same address £8

To join send a cheque payable to '**The Harborne Society**' together with your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address, if appropriate, to

Jenny Buchan, 50 Margaret Grove, B17 9JL.