

## Chairman's Thoughts

We had an interesting AGM attended by around 50 members, most of whom went afterwards to the Mermaid Hotel for an excellent Annual lunch. The AGM elected unopposed a new Conservation Society Committee for the coming year, the members are as follows:

David Bookless	Chairman
Tim Gorman	Hon Secretary
Stuart Harland	Hon Treasurer
Andy Stuart	Publicity & Membership

## Committee Members/Trustees:

Caroline Everett  
Trevor Gooding  
Scott Brotherton  
Jane Skynner

## Hon Consultant:

Alan Dickinson Historical and architectural matters

## Vice Presidents:

The Committee re-appointed Julian Lockett and John Spencer

At the AGM the Chairman, David Bookless, presented a Conservation Award to BBG Commercial Property Ltd represented by partners Christian Burton & Richard Green for the conversion of the old Granary at 46 Ferry Road into apartments. Our two Rother councillors, Cheryl Creaser and Simon McGurk, gave wide ranging contributions concerning Rother activities including planning and environmental activities. It is useful that we can discuss our concerns in person with our representatives. The AGM also welcomed our new Town Mayor Andy Stuart who is of course a long standing committee member of this Society and we wish him well in his new post while pleased he remains on our committee.

## Summer Garden Party

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a leaflet advertising our Summer Garden Party to be held on Sunday 30 June, 2.30 to 5.00 in the garden of Little Orchard House, West Street, Rye. All members and their friends are invited to attend and enjoy cream tea with scones in a wonderful setting. We hope that the rain gods are kinder to us this year, but a warm welcome is guaranteed whatever the weather.

## Planning and Development

I wrote a Chairman's Report for the recent Annual Report in which I discussed the two housing developments which have been in the pipeline for some years but are now likely to be approved this year. One by Plutus (Rye) Ltd would be built on land behind the Queen Adelaide pub on Ferry Road

and has gone to Rother Council for consideration. We have raised numerous objections to the scheme including the lack of any affordable housing, the loss of biodiversity, and the scale of the proposed housing units with its adverse effects for neighbours in Tillingham Avenue.

The second proposed big scheme is off the Winchelsea Road and comprises three components, an Aldi supermarket, a sheltered housing block by McCarthy & Stone and a mixed housing development. The scheme is likely to be submitted to Rother planners very shortly and there already has been a public on site showing of the plans. Clearly there are mixed views in the town concerning the need for a new supermarket and its likely impact on existing shops. My feeling is that our committee is none too supportive though I do see a demand myself for an alternative source of groceries providing perhaps a greater choice of basic products.

My bigger concern is that these housing proposals do not match the local Rye need for housing and in particular there is nothing for young people. I fear that Rye could become even more of a retirement town than it is already as a block of expensive retirement flats will attract retirees from London but probably not locals. I would much prefer a block of affordable apartments for all ages.

### **Rother Long Term Plan**

I think it was mentioned at the AGM that Rother is consulting on a Local Plan to carry us forward to 2040. This plan will sit with our Rye Neighbourhood Plan and will seek to tie in with known Government targets. You can read a hard copy of the plan which runs to around 400 pages in the Rye Library, or it can be accessed on the Rother web site, ([www.Rother.gov.uk](http://www.Rother.gov.uk).) together with consultation forms. Consultation is for 12 weeks from 30 April – 23 July 2024

### **Dilapidated/Neglected Buildings**

Despite the cost of property within the Rye Conservation area, We have a problem with dilapidated housing. There is the ongoing saga of 9 Mermaid Street which is in the hands of Rother enforcement officers as is the house next to the Queens Head pub in Landgate. The Swan Gallery on the corner of West Street/Mermaid Street is another and the Boys Club in Mermaid street also appears empty and neglected. There are different factors involved concerning ownership responsibility but overall the neglect has an adverse impact on neighbours who are helpless to do anything. Your committee considers it would be useful to have an inventory of rundown buildings so that solutions may be found. One factor is the cost of correctly maintaining a listed building, although advice is available, see Historic England: A Guide for Owners of Listed Buildings, accessible on our web site.

### **Colour Matters (Again)**

We get many comments about colour and it is worth emphasising that changing the exterior colour of residential buildings including doors and window frames in the Conservation Area requires planning permission. This is clearly to preserve the special character of streets within the town. For commercial property there is more leeway, and thus we now have a range of colour schemes in the High Street, but I think we should discourage bright shades including lime green or bright red as spotted recently.

### **Some Thanks**

We have been fortunate to have passed over fifty years since the Rye Preservation Society was formed in 1972. We have always encouraged people to become life members and one recently sent us a cheque as he felt he owed us something, having been a member for so long. We were very grateful!

I hope you enjoy the Summer and that we see you at the Garden Party,

Best Wishes *David Bookless*