



## Annual Report and Accounts 2014

# **RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

## *OFFICERS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CONSULTANTS 2014*

### **President**

Sir Donald Sinden, CBE (dec.12 September 2014)

### **Vice-Presidents**

Paul BLOMFIELD Esq

Robert BROMLEY Esq

### **Executive Officers**

John Griffiths, Chairman; 01797 223594, [johngriffiths@freeuk.com](mailto:johngriffiths@freeuk.com)

John Pope, Vice Chairman and Planning Liaison; 01797 252 217, [sjp@johnsylvania.plus.com](mailto:sjp@johnsylvania.plus.com)

Julian Luckett, Chairman, Planning Committee; 01797 252114, [millhousenorthiam@sky.com](mailto:millhousenorthiam@sky.com)

Judith O'Connor, Hon Sec; 01797 252114; [ryeconservationsociety@sky.com](mailto:ryeconservationsociety@sky.com)

Diana Hajikakou, Hon Treasurer; 01797 224046, [kyriacos2010@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kyriacos2010@hotmail.co.uk)

Andy Stuart, Publicity & Membership Secretary; 01797 223831, [nikiandandy@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nikiandandy@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Executive Committee Members**

Andrew Bamji 227961, [bamji@btinternet.com](mailto:bamji@btinternet.com)

Rae Festing 223952

Wayne Jones 229795, [waynethurstonjones@me.com](mailto:waynethurstonjones@me.com)

Mike Slavin 224916, [mikes@pobox.com](mailto:mikes@pobox.com)

### **Planning Committee Members**

Julian Luckett, Chairman

Roger Breeds

Alan Dickinson

Rae Festing

John Griffiths

Wayne Jones

John Pope

Mike Stott

### **Honorary Consultants**

Alan Dickinson

Historical

Nicola Frith

Legal Advisor

John Royle

Maritime Affairs

*Front cover: One of Rye's hidden gardens, Annual Garden Party, June 2014*

*Photo by Claudia Barton*

**RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**  
**NOTICE OF THE FORTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**to be held in St Mary's Church Centre, Rye, at 11.15am on Friday 17 April 2015**

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 25 April 2014
3. Matters arising
4. Reports from the Chairman and Officers; other reports
5. Treasurer's Report and approval of Accounts for the year 2014
6. Elections: the Executive Officers and Committee Members currently serving are listed on the previous page. All seek re-election with the exception of John Pope and Judith O'Connor. Wayne Jones is standing as a successor to John Pope on Planning Liaison. David Bookless, the current Independent Examiner to the Society, is standing for the post of Hon Secretary. The Committee wishes to appoint Mike Stott, a member of the Planning Committee, to the Executive Committee.  
The Committee regrets the passing of Sir Donald Sinden, President, and Paul Blomfield, Vice-President. It wishes to re-appoint Robert Bromley and Kenneth Bird as Vice-Presidents. The post of President remains vacant for the time being.
7. Awards; these will be announced on the day
8. Any Other Business (see note 2)

**Notes**

1. Any member who wishes to nominate another member for the Executive Committee should apply to the Hon Secretary for a nomination form, which must be returned to her at least fourteen days before the meeting.
2. Any member wishing to raise a matter under Any Other Business must notify the Hon Secretary at least fourteen days before the meeting.
3. Please bring your copy of this report with you to the AGM as spare copies will not be provided.

*Judith O'Connor, Hon Secretary*  
*Mill House, Beacon Lane*  
*Northiam, East Sussex TN31 6PJ*  
*tel: 01797 252114, email: ryeconservationsociety@sky.com*

## **1. Minutes of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting, 25 April 2014**

The 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at St Mary's Church Centre, Rye, on Friday 25 April 2014, chaired by Mr John Griffiths and attended by 52 members and guests. The Chairman reported the sad news that Davina Artis, one of the founding members of the Society and a keen supporter and member of the Executive Committee, had died in a nursing home in Eastbourne. Her funeral would take place on Wednesday 7 May at 2pm. The Chairman thanked those present for attending the AGM and explained that he would ask Kenneth Bird to say a few words after the meeting about the on-line local paper, RyeNews, and he would ask Mike Eve for an update on the Fletcher project.

### **1.1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Richard Comotto, Tony and Sue Davis, Col and Mrs Anthony Kimber, Jodie LeFevre, Geoff Piper, Dr and Mrs C Pitcher, Lady Susan Rowe, Priscilla Ryan, Mike Slavin, John Spencer, Andy Stuart, Terri Westerdale and Ken White. The Chairman was sorry to report that the Society's President, Sir Donald Sinden, was unwell and in hospital. He had written to send him best wishes on behalf of the Society.

### **1.2 Minutes of the 41st AGM**

These were approved, proposed by Pamela Burgass and seconded by Rosemary Bagley. There were no matters arising.

### **1.3 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman was particularly pleased that the AGM was being held at this location; the Society had been very concerned in the past that a suitable use be found for this important Lion Street site, and that it should not be used for housing.

He wanted to remind everyone that this AGM dealt with matters which had taken place during 2013. While much had happened since New Year's Day 2014, that would be for the next AGM. He referred to his contribution to the Annual Report; he wanted firstly to stress the importance of the surrounding areas to the appearance of Rye in its setting, both from the marsh and from the local villages, for the benefit of tourism and those who live or work in Rye. Secondly, he cited the importance of industry outside Rye to provide employment. Rye had lost its cattle market, ironworks, shipbuilding, railway goods yard and, like most towns, the shops which used to prepare and package the items sold. The chemist no longer made up prescriptions, the butcher no longer took in live animals, the grocer no longer weighed out butter or sugar. Those shops which remained needed less space and fewer staff. Rye as a town needed industry and activities nearby to provide employment.

The Chairman wanted to thank the Society's committee members, no fewer than four of whom came from outside Rye. He invited them to give their reports.

### **Julian Lockett, Chairman of the Planning Committee**

2013 had seen the National Planning Policy Framework begin its impact on planning across the country. Case law was being established and it would appear that, where decisions both locally and at appeal did not fit in with Government policy, they were called in by Minister

Pickles and overturned. This then provided direction for the Inspectorate in future appeals, as those who watched the BBC programme on planning would recognise only too well.

Behind all of this was the basic proposition that development needed to be encouraged, initially in order to bring the country out of recession. As things now seemed to be on the mend, the emphasis had changed to meeting the housing crisis.

This overarching drive to ensure that development, principally by the volume house-builders, proceeded as easily as possible had led the Government to the contradictory position that they agreed to reduce the percentage of 'affordable housing' that developers were required to provide, of up to 40% in some cases, to zero if the developer could prove that the development was uneconomical if the affordable housing was provided. Given that in places such as Rye 'affordable housing' was at a premium, this approach was self-defeating given the difficulty of development in Rye.

It should be remembered that affordable housing did not mean housing that anyone can afford to buy, but housing that was not for sale but provided for rent or let/buy, usually by a social housing provider.

Rother's Core Strategy had still to be approved. Further hearings were held in January of this year principally as a result of changes to the overall housing numbers required by the Inspector. Because of this delay, Rother was increasingly vulnerable to large-scale developments which currently would have to be considered under the NPPF. In order to resolve the potential impasse, Rother had asked the Inspector to propose modifications if they were considered necessary to make the Plan sound.

The upshot for Rye was that the Core Strategy currently proposed that between 355 and 400 new dwellings were required by 2028, an increase of up to 160 dwellings. Rother had confirmed that development within Rye was difficult due to the town's unique geographical position, historic form and the risk of flooding. In doing so, it admitted that the opportunities for growth would principally be sought within the built-up areas of the town.

This was what the Rye Neighbourhood Plan would look at by developing options for development to meet Rother's anticipated numbers which could then be voted on by Rye's residents. In parallel with these strategies, it was intended to develop a design statement to guide future developers on what materials and form their proposals should follow. The Society had been asked to help in producing this and was currently looking at how it could be structured. It was essential to cover the whole of Rye, not just the Citadel, and that it was flexible enough to allow innovation whilst ensuring that standards were raised.

The start of development around the fringes of the old town could be seen with the application for Bridge Point, which the Society had supported, and that for the Gristmill Pine site, which the Society had opposed. The initial scheme for the Gristmill Pine site had now been referred to appeal on the grounds of non-determination but a revised design had also been submitted. This was yet to be considered, but Rye deserved a fine modern building for this prominent and important site.

Rother's referral to the Minister of the impasse over the supermarket site would appear to an outsider to be a tactic to avoid positive action and possible expense arising from any future compulsory purchase of part of or all the site. Given the desire of Rye College to expand, the

potential of the Freda Gardham site and other possibilities, it was clear that the Neighbourhood Plan should take this problem into consideration.

I would like to thank the Society's Planning Committee members for their support over the past year and to welcome Wayne Jones and Mike Stott who joined us this year. The number of applications considered over the year had dropped again, reflecting the financial climate, and the majority remained minor alterations and extensions to houses.

If you are concerned about an application please make your concerns known to us and we will consider them as part of our deliberations. In some cases we may not agree with you but this does not restrict you from making your own comments to Rother. Some of the points of difference may well relate to matters that lie outside of planning criteria, such as construction traffic, drainage, party wall matters and the preservation of views and we try to be constructive so as to maintain our standing with Rother.

Finally one of the areas that I would like to see included within the Neighbourhood Plan is for more and better drawn information to explain proposals, not in every case but where a site is deemed important, and for such applications to be made more widely available. What is required should be set out clearly and cover such areas as including adjoining buildings in all proposed elevations. How can a building be considered when its relationship to its semi-detached neighbour is not drawn? In many cases, what a building will look like seems to be given the lowest priority, coming in many cases after considerations of bats and badgers! I believe that an application should only be considered as valid when it is adequately described and explained and I am concerned that, whilst Rother has standards, they do not appear to be enforced.

We need to be aware that Rye is precious and fragile and we must be sure that what is proposed is worthy of inclusion in our town. Doctors bury their mistakes; architects will have to live with their new buildings for a long time.

### **John Pope, Planning Liaison Officer**

The Chairman commented that John Pope had perhaps the most difficult job in the Society. He was extraordinarily successful in keeping up pressure to ensure that jobs were done, keeping matters "on his books" until the matter was resolved, often having to deal with difficult people. John did not want to add to his contribution to the Annual Report but thanked those members who had been vigilant in reporting various issues, which had helped him very much. He regretted the cutbacks at Rother District Council Planning Department, which meant that all but the most flagrant breaches would not be followed up. It was a case of relying on the goodwill of property owners to respect planning and listed building regulations. He asked members to continue the good work of keeping the Society informed where necessary.

### **Andy Stuart, Publicity and Membership**

In Andy's absence, those present were referred to his contribution to the Annual Report.

## **Mike Slavin, Community Energy**

Mike Slavin had sent his apologies for absence as he was participating in a Community Energy workshop in Lewes, but had sent the following report.

The community energy scene in and around Rye had evolved quite rapidly over the last year. The relentless drumbeat of increasing energy prices had been a constant impulse to improve energy supply arrangements, as well as improving how energy was used.

Last autumn there had been a very successful Energy Day at Tilling Green Community Centre. One result was the strong desire expressed for the community to have better control over its future energy supply. As a result, RX Energy was currently being formed - an industrial provident society owned by the community, operating as a local energy services company, sharing the benefits of becoming more sustainable. Over the last three months, several potential projects for solar energy generation had been analysed and exciting possibilities found, given the abundance of suitable roofs in the area.

It was therefore hoped to create a share prospectus in the next few months to install one or more projects, providing an opportunity for residents to invest in their future. This would be an exciting prospect, helping to ensure the future prosperity of the area, and making residents less reliant on external energy sources.

At the same time, the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock had to be improved. Several energy workshops had been held in such places as Strand Court and Tilling Green, and it was hoped to expand these. Importantly, work was underway to include sustainability and energy efficiency in the Rye Neighbourhood Plan, currently being developed.

To be successful, RX Energy had to attract talented people in the community, working together to ensure a sustainable future for the area. Anyone interested in being involved was asked to contact Mike.

## **John Griffiths, Events**

The Chairman was by tradition the organiser of events; he wanted first to apologise to the Friends of Rye Art Gallery for arranging the Society's visit to Deal and Walmer on the same day as their visit to Pallant House Gallery in Chichester.

There seemed to have been a good formula for Society visits. This involved choosing a town within around two hours coach travel from Rye, and the Society was working through the Cinque Port towns. The visiting group was met by members of the local Civic or Historic Society for a talk on the town and a guided tour. A visit to an interesting local landmark building was also incorporated, and a pre-booked inexpensive lunch. The Chairman then prevailed upon one of the members taking part in the visit to write it up, and was very grateful for the reports which appeared on page 16 of the Annual Report.

## **1.4 Treasurer's Report**

The Chairman wanted to thank David Bookless for once again acting as Independent Examiner for the Society's accounts and invited Diana Hajikakou to give her report. She was glad to say that the Society's finances were in a satisfactory state, subscription income having



increased a little over the past year. Two tranches of Gift Aid were shown in the accounts, one relating to the previous year. There had been a good excess of income over expenditure for the summer Garden Party, when the weather had been very kind. Diana was grateful to the Society's Independent Examiner, David Bookless, for overseeing the accounts, and was glad to report that he had agreed to continue in this role.

There being no questions on the accounts, they and the reappointment of David Bookless were unanimously approved, proposed by Andrew Blyth and seconded by Edwin Gibson.

## **1.5 Election of Officers**

The Chairman proposed that the Executive Officers and Committee Members seeking re-election, and those co-opted since the last AGM, should be approved en bloc, together with the President, Sir Donald Sinden, and Vice-Presidents Paul Blomfield and Robert Bromley. The Officers and Committee Members were:

Chairman, John Griffiths  
Vice-Chairman, John Pope  
Honorary Secretary, Judith O'Connor  
Honorary Treasurer, Diana Hajikakou  
Membership and Publicity Officer, Andy Stuart  
Chairman of Planning Committee, Julian Lockett  
Planning Liaison Officer, John Pope  
Community Energy, Mike Slavin  
Committee Members, Andrew Bamji, Rae Festing, Wayne Jones

These appointments were approved unanimously, proposed by Penny Goldney and seconded by Gill Wood.

The Chairman now wished to propose that Kenneth Bird be appointed a Vice-President of the Society. Kenneth had been Honorary Secretary of the Society for ten years, since when he had gone on to carry out much work in support of conservation in Sussex, in particular with the Sussex Heritage Trust. Julian Lockett had now taken over from Kenneth Bird as a Trustee of the Sussex Heritage Trust. The appointment of Kenneth Bird as Vice-President was seconded by Monica Dunn and approved unanimously.

## **1.6 Changes to the Society's Constitution**

The proposed changes were those shown in bold on pages 16-20 of the Annual Report. They had been discussed by the Committee at some length, with guidance from the Society's Legal Advisor, Nicky Frith. They related mainly to tidying up and modernising the Constitution to cover changes in media available. The procedure to remove a Committee member had also been included, should that be needed. These changes were approved by those present, and the changes were unanimously agreed, proposed by Julian Lockett and seconded by Penny Goldney.



## **1.7 Awards**

The Chairman informed those present that the Society's awards were given on merit and not on an annual basis. In some years no award was made. However this year he took great pleasure in making two awards. One was a Townscape Award made to Drs Andrew and Liz Bamji for a major contribution to the townscape of Rye by the restoration and refurbishment of Norman House, West Street. The second was a Special Award for the sympathetic re-use of an existing building, presented to Carolyn Denham of Merchant & Mills Cloth Shop. If any member wanted to suggest candidates for future awards, they were welcome to do so.

## **1.8 Any other Business**

Many thanks were given to Rae Festing for all her help over the year. There being no other business, the AGM closed at 12.00.

The Chairman invited Kenneth Bird to speak about RyeNews. This online newspaper would fill a gap, supplying information on voluntary organisations, what was going on in the area, providing a voice for concerns, opinions and debate. It would showcase tourist attractions and entertainment. Help and contributions were needed from photographers and reporters, and support from the general community if it was to be a success.

Mike Eve was then asked to give an update on the Fletcher Centre project. He said that it was a credit to the community that it was all happening, bringing the whole facility back to life. It had been necessary to bring in a professional cinema organisation; Kino Digital had been granted a 25-year fully repairing sub-lease. The cost of creating the shell building was £950,000 and the fit-out by Kino would cost a further £500,000. Contracts had been signed with Kino and with Durnell & Sons, a family building firm with an excellent reputation. Jonathan Dunn were the architects. Construction was now well under way and the expected completion date was November 2014. Mike gave a description of the renovation and construction work needed, and said that shares were still available and additional loans would assist in providing a bigger buffer. It was a tremendous project for all of Rye, especially in the winter time, bringing more people into the town.

Judith O'Connor  
Hon Secretary

## **2. Rye Conservation Society Forty-third Annual Report for 2014**

### **2.1 *Chairman's Report***

Oscar for 'Best Location'. It has been an interesting and eventful year for the Society. I will leave it for the various officers to provide the details but I would like to draw attention to the ways the conservation of Rye has paid off in particular as a film location. Following the earlier filming of *The Monuments Men*, this year we had the use of Rye as the setting for *Mapp and Lucia* and I feel Rye deserves an Oscar for 'Best Location'. It was interesting to see the way the film producers introduced subtle colour into the streets of Rye.

It would be interesting to see what a film or stage lighting director would do to light the town by night even if a little more expensive than a lick of paint.

As Chairman of the Society, I am extremely grateful for all the help and support I have received throughout the year from the Officers and members of the Committees. Your Executive Committee meets every four weeks and the Planning Committee every two weeks but, thanks to emails, the Executive Committee is constantly on hand to deal with matters as they arise so it is a little surprising that there is still so much to deal with at our meetings.

In January 2014 we welcomed Andrew Bamji and Wayne Jones on to the Executive Committee as co-opted members. They were duly elected at the AGM in April 2014.

Later in the year John Pope, our Planning Liaison Officer for the past twelve years and Vice-Chairman for the past four years, and Judith O'Connor our Hon Secretary for the past four years let it be known that they wished to stand down at the next AGM (April 2015).

Both John and Judith are extremely busy people and both have been perfect examples of the old adage that, if you want something done, give it to a busy person to do. The Society is extremely grateful to them.

I must congratulate Julian on his patience and persistence in at last finding out where his specification for the repair of cobbles was stuck in the system and not therefore getting through to the men on the job. At last we have an example, at the top of Lion Street, of how repairs should be carried out.

Judith as Hon Secretary has been chasing Rother District Council regarding their neglect of the Landgate Arch and Julian has consulted English Heritage about getting it put on their 'Buildings at Risk Register'.

As the year drew to a close there were rumblings that Rother was beginning to act. The Society considers that, as the owners of a Grade I listed Ancient Monument, Rother District Council is legally responsible for all the cost of its proper upkeep.

Cobbles, the state of the Landgate and the future of the Old Monastery are some of the topics which continue to engage the Society's interest.

My thanks go to all who have been so helpful over the year.

*John Griffiths*

## **2.2 Membership and Publicity Report**

Membership of the Society in the last year as expressed by income from subscriptions saw a small rise over the previous year. But this good news can be counterbalanced by the fact that there was a small fall in membership numbers. The reason for this discrepancy? The income from one life membership equals many annual subs. With this in mind, the Society would be grateful if any people paying annually 'upgraded' to life membership!

After that naked sales pitch, the Society produced fewer newsletters in numbers last year, but they were larger in content, offering four pages of stories and information. And credit for this expanding publication must go to our Chairman who is as prolific a writer as Boris Johnson

and as eager a publisher as Eddie Shah! My job is simply to turn up with the membership list for the labels and to deliver the newsletters (with the tremendous and generous support of Denny Nicol, Jill Johnson and Gill and Paddy Harvey).

The Society gained some publicity in the local press over the year, including a photo story in Rye Observer and RyeNews of a work party of senior Committee members who took it upon themselves to clear up the weeds around the recently-repaired cistern in Wish Ward. This story served to highlight just how dedicated the Society is to looking after our town and showing it in the best possible light!

*Andy Stuart*

### **2.3     *Treasurer's Report***

The Society's financial position is still a sound one; we have again had a small surplus of income over expenditure. It is to be hoped that this satisfactory position will continue, that the events and outings remain popular and well-supported and that we will continue to attract subscription income.

*Diana Hajikakou*

# **RYE CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2014

## **Assets at 31.12.14**

	£
Bank balance Lloyds TSB	2473.48
Charities Deposit Account	10,967.65
less debts (1)	345.77
plus credits	
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>13,095.36</b>

## **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2013 and 2014**

Income	2014	2013
Events and Outings	4,120.47	3,812.00
Subscriptions	978.00	941.00
Donations	30.00	26.22
Gift Aid (2)	192.07	331.91
COIF Interest	46.29	53.17
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>5,366.83</b>	<b>5,164.30</b>
<b>Income minus Expenditure</b>	<b>577.57</b>	<b>598.97</b>

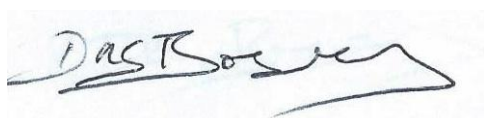
### **Notes**

(1) Uncashed Cheques

(2) Two years Gift Aid in 2013

Accounts for year ended 31 December 2014 prepared by Hon Treasurer, Mrs D J Hajikakou

I have examined the income and expenditure accounts of the Rye Conservation Society for the year ended 31 December 2014 and have compared them with the books and vouchers supplied. In my opinion they are correct and in accordance.



Independent Examiner David Bookless, BSc  
Date: 18 February 2015

**Assets at 31.12.13**

	£
<b>Bank balance Lloyds TSB</b>	1,994.93
<b>Charities Deposit Account</b>	10,921.36
<b>less debts (1)</b>	398.50
<b>plus credits</b>	
<b>Total assets</b>	12,517.79

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Events and Outings</b>	<b>2,500.95</b>	2,466.95
<b>Affiliation Fees</b>	<b>105.00</b>	105.00
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>190.00</b>	190.00
<b>Printing/Stationery</b>	<b>234.10</b>	161.77
<b>Post/Telephone</b>	<b>87.49</b>	36.71
<b>Administration</b>		384.01
<b>AGM/Awards</b>	<b>1,381.20</b>	1,185.00
<b>Sundries</b>	<b>290.52</b>	
<b>Web Site</b>		35.89
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,789.26</b>	4,565.33

## **2.4     *Planning Committee Report***

In September 2014 the Rother Core Strategy was adopted following final approval from the Planning Inspector. The Core Strategy is the key planning policy document within the Rother Local plan. It sets out the overall vision and objectives for the development of the whole of Rother up to 2028 and includes policies relating to the scale and distribution of development, although it does not allocate specific sites for development. This will be covered by a separate document called the Development and Site Allocation Plan, currently being devised. The Core Strategy also contains core policies that address key issues facing the district relating to sustainable resources management, community development, housing, the environment and transport.

Alongside the Core Strategy and its policies there are the saved policies from the Local Plan 2006, all of which are used to determine planning applications and to these will be added the specific Rye-based policies within the Rye Neighbourhood Plan, should it be adopted at a referendum.

The most important decisions that will come out of the Neighbourhood Plan will be the location of the additional housing indicated within the Core Strategy, approximately 200 more houses than already committed, and additional employment areas. Other potential users that have indicated an interest in Rye include Travelodge.

2014 saw a further twist in the saga of the now former Sainsbury's site, with the withdrawal of both Sainsbury and Tesco as a result of a retrenchment by the traditional supermarket chains. The site is currently being marketed as suitable for housing development should no other supermarket be interested.

The appeal decision on the proposed building on the former Gristmill Pine site is awaited whilst the Bridge Point development was granted consent. The Society strenuously opposed the former on the grounds of bulk, massing and overall lack of design, but believes that the Bridge Point scheme points a way forward for the Rock Channel area.

The Society has been active in pressing Rother to undertake a condition survey of the Landgate so that necessary repairs to this Grade 1 listed monument can be undertaken.

The Society supported the retrospective planning application for the external works to Norman House and was delighted when it gained consent, against the officer's recommendation. Our support was also vindicated when Norman House was given an award by Sussex Heritage Trust. It was also gratifying to see the redevelopment of the Lion Street site and the completion of Kino, as the Society has been supportive of this scheme.

The overall number of planning and listed building applications considered by the Planning Committee, 92 in total, was slightly down on 2013. One area of concern is the low quality of the drawings submitted with some applications. This does not apply to the majority of applications, mostly small extensions or alterations, but has been a problem with larger applications. In our view, such applications should not be validated by Rother until sufficient information is available for the schemes to be properly considered. The lack of drawings of an existing building, even if it is to be demolished, and the lack of drawings showing the surrounding developments means that it is difficult to appreciate what is proposed. Rother has

published details of the information to be provided but does not seem to insist on all applicants meeting these requirements. The difficulties are compounded by the fact that information is now mainly available only via the Rother website which makes scaling drawings difficult. Few residents have the ability to print out anything larger than A4 and at this scale information is easily missed.

I would like to thank all the members of the Planning Committee for their commitment and input as well as welcoming Mike Stott and Wayne Jones, our new members.

*Julian Lockett*

## **2.5     *Planning Liaison Report***

We have continued to actively engage with local authorities in an effort to maintain the architectural integrity and appearance of the town and its environs. We have been encouraged by a more positive approach by East Sussex Highways concerning the quality of workmanship employed in the repair and reinstatement of listed cobbled streets within the Conservation Area. ESCC has acknowledged that the improvement in workmanship and materials displayed in a contract recently completed at the top of Lion Street was as a result of a meeting between two of our committee members and sub-contractors that took place in September, at which the Society's recommended reinstatement specification was discussed and adopted.

Another successful outcome concerned the re-pointing and general maintenance of the Town Cistern in Wish Ward. After months of negotiation with Rother, the contract was completed satisfactorily. Subsequently, committee members were seen, and photographed by the local press, getting their hands dirty in tackling the overgrown vegetation. Our eventual aim is to have paving setts laid in front of the cistern, thus removing the need for an annual blitz, and restoring its surrounds to its likely original.

Some years ago, we were successful in persuading Rother to cut back intrusive shrubbery at The Lookout at the end of Watchbell Street. This is a favourite view-point for visitors and residents and the problem has now recurred. We have cited the precedent set by Rother, and work is due to start within the next few weeks.

We are concerned about the condition of some properties within the Conservation area – The Old Monastery for example – but it has become increasingly difficult to persuade Rother to take enforcement action, mainly due to staff cuts. Members have drawn attention to the appearance of the historic Victorian properties which lie behind Rope Walk, and we shall continue to monitor the owner's future plans. A constant vigil is kept on the "shipbuilding" on land at the rear of Rock Channel, with Rother sharing the concerns of local residents and ourselves. We have also registered disquiet with the owners and the Highways Authorities about the condition of the boundary walls under the cliff abutting South Undercliff.

*John Pope*



## **2.6     *Energy Scene 2013-14***

During 2014 the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) decided to investigate the formation, financial basis, and taxation regime for all new cooperative entities and this affected our local group, together with hundreds of other community energy groups all round the UK, leading to significant delays during the year.

Locally we have been involved with both energy generation and energy conservation activities and, to manage this properly, the group was divided into two separate entities, RX Power for energy generation, and RX Energy for energy conservation and advice.

RX Power is involved in the installation of electrical generation and space heating capacity, funding the supply and installation of the equipment and control systems required, this to be done initially through share raising in the local community. Thus, instead of the profits flowing out of the community (and indeed flowing out of the country in many cases), they will be used to pay interest and capital back to local investors. RX Power has identified several sites for solar projects in and around Rye and developed methods to evaluate them, learning from the experience of other Sussex groups through CES , Community Energy South, the umbrella association of Sussex community energy groups.

Any surplus will be used to support the activities of RX Energy in reducing carbon emissions locally; in practical terms this means people being helped to select the best energy tariffs possible, as well as minimising their home's energy losses by a range of measures including draught proofing, insulation and better controls. We have had to recognise that much of the housing stock is damp, draughty and badly insulated, leading to high energy bills. RX Energy piloted drop-in energy advice sessions at events such as the popular Swap Shops in Tilling Green and St Mary's, where residents brought their energy bills, it being possible in some cases to save up to £200 per annum in energy costs.

Energy strategy forms an integral part of the local Neighbourhood Plans for Rye and the surrounding district, including Rye Harbour, the group taking part in the Neighbourhood Plan sessions held during 2014. These activities recognise that the area has outstanding potential energy generation resources, using not only solar technology, but also heat pumps and combined heat and power (CHP) units, all combining to reduce local carbon emissions and keep the benefits in the local community.

*Mike Slavin*

## **2.7     *Events***

After considering our responsibility to make our formal meetings accessible to all, it was decided to change the venue for our Annual General Meeting away from Rye Town Hall to the St Mary's Centre opposite. We then adjourned to our traditional venue for our Annual Lunch, the Mermaid Inn. And a very good lunch it was, taken in the dining room which we filled.

**Visit to Deal and Walmer Castle, 9 May. I am grateful to Jean Floyd for her report.**

Another happy and memorable day; the excursion to Deal with its first-rate guides, excellent lunch, visual delights and decent weather too.

At Deal's shingle beach we were greeted by Alan Clarke, Chairman of the Deal Society, who led us to the end of the pier (the length of the Titanic) for refreshments in the award-winning café and our initial briefing on this gem of the East Kent coast.

Alan pointed out the notoriously dangerous Goodwin Sands and the safe haven area between Deal and the sands. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as many as 400 ships at a time might be visible from the shore.

From the pier we had excellent panoramic views of the seascape and the long promenade waterfront and could appreciate how disastrous it would have been for the town if a would-be developer of the 1960s had had his way in demolishing many of the sea-front buildings to make way for skyscraper local government offices! Our sister organisation, The Deal Society, was formed in protest and is now celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding and its success in 'saving Deal'.



On our way to a tour of Conservation Area streets, Alan took us to the Grade II listed Town Hall with its large and impressive oak-panelled assembly room. Our pleasant rambles included a stroll along the High Street which won the Daily Telegraph's inaugural 'High Street of the Year' award in January 2014.

Deal today seems the quintessential English seaside town. Facing the shingle shore is a picturesque seafront row of those saved 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages – each with a different arrangement of doors and windows and an individually-shaped roof – interspersed with local landmarks: the Royal Marines Barracks; the four storey Timeball Tower and museum – formerly a semaphore tower used to signal ships (and by the Coast Blockade to pass information about smugglers), now triggered to drop its ball at 1 pm precisely each day, like Greenwich. Behind can be seen Deal Castle, one of King Henry VIII's three Tudor fortresses along this shore and the cupolas and spires of numerous churches and chapels.

Alan took us for a tour of Kent's first conservation area – mainly Georgian terraced houses and renovated smugglers' cottages clustered around Middle Street – with stops at some of the Blue Plaque houses where the famous once lived.



All this was before lunch at The Three Compasses, another treat. And then our coach transported us the two miles to Walmer Castle where we were met by Julian Steel, the castle's English Heritage steward. There can be little that Julian doesn't know about Walmer Castle – its history, building development, fascinating contents, Lord Warden residents and their visitors.

Since its beginnings in 1539 as a coastal artillery fort constructed by Henry VIII against the threat of invasion by Spain, Walmer Castle has evolved from fortress to comfortable residence, the sizes, shapes and contents of its rooms changing constantly over the years according to the needs and tastes of its occupants and their guests.

### **Annual Garden Party**

This was held on Sunday 1 June and we were grateful to Niki and Andy Stuart for allowing us once again to use their fascinating garden at Little Orchard House. Rae Festing received our thanks for her help and we were also grateful for some superb cakes made by Jen Tomkinson.



**Visit to Sandwich Wednesday, 10 September 2014. I am grateful to Irene Jones for this report.**

We left Rye by coach, as usual, from the car park and benefitting from the dry September weather we had an enjoyable trip to Sandwich, one of the original Cinque Ports.

We were greeted by members of the Sandwich History Society easily identifiable by their sashes, outside the Guildhall.

After coffee and cakes, we were given a talk by Dr Frank Andrews, Vice-President of the Sandwich History Society. Dr Andrews proved to have an extraordinary wealth of fascinating information, cramming into no more than 15 minutes a detailed history of the town, whilst at the same time making us aware of how much in common Rye and Sandwich have had over the centuries.

We then divided into groups and had guided tours of the town, highlights of which were the harbour-side and the apparently longest stretch of timber-framed houses in England. As Sandwich's greatest time of prosperity was in the 14th century, many of the buildings were from that period and were obviously looked after sympathetically by the residents.

After a lunch, which was up to the usual excellent standard to which we have become accustomed on these trips (!) at the wonderfully named "No Name Bistro" we had free time to wander around by ourselves but, in particular, to visit the Secret Gardens of Salutation House. These gardens were truly magnificent, containing more varieties of dahlias than this writer ever thought existed!

Many of our party still found the time and space for tea and cake at the garden tea shop before returning to the coach for the journey home. Another thoroughly fascinating and instructive day out organised by John and Helen.

**Rye Arts Festival**

On Wednesday 17 September the Society sponsored a talk as part of the Rye Arts Festival. We were grateful to Philip Venning, following his retirement as Secretary of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, for coming to Rye to give an excellent talk.

**Christmas Celebration**

On Friday 5 December we held our Christmas Celebration in Rye Town Hall helped by Rae Festing and other willing members.



Among our guests were Bernardine Fiddimore, Mayor of Rye, and Amber Rudd, MP for Hastings and Rye, who was invited to say a few words.

*John Griffiths*

## **2.8 Highways Forum**

RCS has two representatives (Andrew Bamji and Diana Hajikakou) on the Rye Town Council (RTC) Highways Forum, which also comprises Councillors and representatives of the police, Chamber of Commerce, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) road safety division and Rye Community Transport. The Society has had significant input to the Forum, which has also been in close communication with the Transport subcommittee of the Rye Neighbourhood Plan.

**Cobbles.** The Society assisted in negotiations with East Sussex County Council and local utility companies regarding the repair of Rye's cobbled streets. Previous repairs have often been poorly done. However, Julian Luckett and Andrew Bamji attended an ESCC meeting in Uckfield in 2014, and presented the Society's documents on cobble repair (available to members on request). They were reassured that future repairs would, as far as possible, be done in accordance with the specifications suggested. Members should however be aware that temporary tarmac repairs, while unsightly, are an acceptable method of stabilising a defect to prevent spread.

**Buildings protection.** The tight corners of Rye's streets have resulted in damage to buildings sideswiped by larger vehicles that have turned too close on their nearside. Particular problems have been at the corners of West Street/Mermaid Street and Market Street/Church Square (Pump Street). In the latter case the Society designed the installation of a corner bollard and attended a site meeting to plan its positioning. The bollard has been effective in stopping the regular damage to the corner of Flushing Cottage.

**Parking.** The Forum has discussed the continuing problems of inconsiderate and illegal parking, which has caused some potentially dangerous problems particularly in the Citadel area and also has an adverse impact on the street scene. Members should be reminded that parking in most of the streets in the Citadel is not allowed except for picking up/dropping off. The Forum has been advised however that, in the current financial climate, parking enforcement will not be undertaken, not least as any revenue generated from fines goes to the Department of Justice. The preferred solution of the Forum was for RTC to employ its own warden, but the Council decided that this is unaffordable. Decriminalisation of parking is an option. However this would require the installation of ticket machines. The Society has suggested that an informal advice ticket might be introduced under RTC's control as a polite way of informing illegal parkers of the regulations.

The Forum has pressed for better signage to the Gibbet's Marsh car park, which is underused. It is possible that, with the likely changes required to the station car park if the HS1 extension goes ahead (currently proposed to start works in 2017-19), the coach parking area there will be closed and coaches directed to park up at Gibbet's Marsh after dropping off.

*Dr Andrew Bamji*

## **2.9     *Awards***

Awards are only given if there is a project that deserves recognition so there are some years when no award is given. And of course the Committee needs to be aware of potential entries in order to be able to consider them.

In 2014 the Society gave awards for two very different projects. Norman House was an unusual case because the Conservation Officer was requiring that the newly cleaned brick facade be re-rendered and painted white as it had been when the building was listed in the 1950s. The matter went to the local authority planning committee who came down in favour of the building's owners who wished the brick to be seen.

The second project was for the Merchant and Mills Cloth Shop at 14 Tower Street, Rye. Here good colours, good lettering and simple lighting created a straightforward backdrop in keeping with the goods on sale, at the same time the rugged simplicity of the building was retained.

Norman House in West Street was singled out for the Society's Townscape Award 2014 for 'a major contribution to the enhancement of the townscape of Rye by its restoration and refurbishment'. A certificate and ceremonial brick were presented to the owners, Drs Andrew and Liz Bamji.

A Special Award 'for the sympathetic re-use of an existing building' was presented to Carolyn Denham and Roderick Field for the Merchant and Mills Cloth Shop at 14 Tower Street, Rye.

## **2.10   *Maritime Affairs***

Another fairly quiet year at Rye Harbour over the last year, but trade into and out of the commercial wharf is picking up again with the recovery in the economy gaining ground. The largest volume of cargo imported continues to be various types of aggregate (25,000 tons during 2013/14) and the export of grain from Romney Marsh is again proving popular, with 15,500 tons going to Rotterdam to make biscuits!

The value of fish landed has fallen over the last three years, due mainly to EU restrictive quotas on (particularly) plaice and skate affecting the Under 10m fleet at Rye. This and the cost of fuel has reduced the size of the fleet by about 30%; 16 vessels are berthed at Simmons Quay and another 10 smaller boats elsewhere, which do not seem to go out regularly. Mooring facilities for fishing vessels are about to be improved with a 100m floating pontoon anchored in the Middle Channel (above Rastrum's wharf), and another one for recreational craft in Strand Quay west side with a ramp access ashore at one end.

The Maritime Festival will be held this year on 2 August.

*John Royle*



## **2.11 Obituary**

### **Sir Donald Sinden CBE     9 October 1923 – 12 September 2014 President of Rye Conservation Society since 1995**

Members of the Society were saddened to learn of the death of Sir Donald on 12 September 2014. Sir Donald had been appointed President of Rye Conservation Society at the Annual General Meeting held on 21 April 1995. He was a keen supporter of the Society and, while he took an interest in its work, this was without interference.

He regularly attended the Annual Luncheon, Annual Garden Parties at Lamb House, 11 High Street and at Little Orchard House. At Christmas Gatherings in the Town Hall, he would step forward and use his strong and distinctive voice to repeat the winning numbers of the raffle over the noise of the party. There would then be silence as he told one or two of his many jokes and between acts he was good company and a ready mixer. At the Annual Luncheons at the Mermaid his presence, his company and his stories made for happy memorable occasions.

The Society's Chairman, John Griffiths, and his wife Helen represented the Society at Sir Donald's funeral which took place at St John the Baptist, Wittersham on 19 September 2014. Rye Conservation Society will miss Sir Donald Sinden.





## LIST OF MEMBERS

Mr & Mrs D W Adie, Mrs E Allen, Mr P Allsop, Lord and Lady Amptill, Mr & Mrs S Axbey, Mrs R D Bagley, Mr D K Bain, Mr N Bainbridge, Mrs J I Ballantyne, Dr & Mrs A Bamji, Dr & Mrs J P Barton, Mr G Bayntun, Mr D Bayntun, Mrs D Beswick, Mr & Mrs K Bird, Mrs L Bonnet & Mr M Mark, Mrs R Boucherat, Mr & Mrs E J Bourne, Mrs S Bowler, Mr B N Bowsher, Mr & Mrs R K Breeds, Mr R Brigden, Mr & Mrs R Bromley, Mr & Mrs G Brooke, Mrs J Brooking, Mrs P Burgass, Ms E Butt & Mr A Blyth, The Revd & Mrs W A G Buxton, Mr & Mrs A T Champion, Mr C Chizlett, Mr R Cigman, Mrs J Clark, Mrs N S Cockayne, Mr P Collard, Mr R Comotto, Mr & Mrs S Compton, Mrs J Conlin, Mr & Mrs N Dacre, Mr & Mrs A J Davis, Mr C Dean, Mr A Dickinson, Mrs K J Digby Worsley, Mrs J N Dixon, Mr & Mrs A C Douglas, Mr A V Downend & Mr W Taylor, Ms Dragacevic & Mr R Gubbins, Mrs M Dunn, Mr & Mrs P Dyce, Mr G H Dyer, Ms P Earl & Mr S Lester, Mr & Mrs E Elliott, Mrs E Ellwood, Mr & Mrs T J Esdaile, Mr & Mrs R Evans, Mr & Mrs M Eve, Mr & Mrs P Ewart, Lady Eyre, Mrs R Festing, Mrs P Field, Mr K Fitz-Hugh, Dr & Mrs B N Floyd, Mr C J Foster, Ms H Foster, Maj E W Fox, Mr & Mrs N Franklin, Mrs V Fricker and Mr M Slavin, Miss N Frith, Ms J Gayton, Mrs B Gibbs, Mr E Gibson, Miss J Gibson, Mrs M R Gillum, Mrs P Goldney, Mrs E Goldsworthy, Mr & Mrs T Gooding, Dr & Mrs I J Graham-Bryce, Mrs M Greenhouse, Mr M Gregory, Mr & Mrs J Griffiths, Mr & Mrs J Gurney, Mr & Mrs F Hadfield, Mrs J Hadfield & Mr R Martin, Mr R Haines, Mr & Mrs K Hajikakou, Miss A Hamilton, Mrs P Hamilton, Mrs Y Hamilton, Mrs E Hargreaves, Mr & Mrs S Harland, Mr J Hart, Mrs C A Harvey, Mr & Mrs P Harvey, Mr R Hayley-Barker, Mr & Mrs R Haynes, Miss J B M Heasman, Mr & Mrs B Hodgson, Mrs J Hodgson, Mr & Mrs J Hori, Mrs M Houslander, Mr & Mrs J Howe, Dr N P Hudd, Mr & Mrs J J Huddle, Mrs R Iredale, Mr & Mrs K G Isted, Mr J Jempson, Mrs J Johnson, Mr & Mrs W Jones, Mr & Mrs W Kalis, Col & Mrs A Kimber, Mrs J Kirkham, Mrs P C Kneen, Mrs E Kurrein, Mrs J Lait & Mr P Jones, Mrs R A Lampon, Miss J Lampon, Mr & Mrs A Lang, Mr & Mrs J Lanigan, Mr J Layfield, Mrs D Layton, Mrs J Le Fevre, Mrs J Lee, Mrs M A Lingard, Mr & Mrs T Llanwarne, Mr I Lloyd, Mr J Luckett & Ms J O'Connor, Ms C Lyon, Ms S Maddock, Ms C Mallinder, Mr & Mrs D Martin Betts, Mrs D Mayor, Mrs M Meacher, The Mermaid Inn, Mr & Mrs M Message, Mr & Mrs A C Mitchell-Innes, Mr N Moy, Mrs J H Moya, Mrs S Murphy, Mrs J V Mussett, Mr & Mrs B M Nealon, Dr & Mrs W R Neilson, Mr & Mrs D H Nelson, Ms R Nelson, Mrs E D Nicol, Mrs M R Nix, Mr D Nixon, Mr & Mrs T Nunn, Mr B Oldman, Mr J Owen, Mrs P Owen, Mr & Mrs F Palmer, Mr & Mrs R Parren, Mr & Mrs A J Peroy, Mr & Mrs S Pettigrew, Mr & Mrs B Phillips, Mr & Mrs J C Pilcher, Mr G Piper & Ms T Westerdale, Dr & Mrs C S Pitcher, Mr & Mrs J Pope, Mrs K Postle, Mrs B Prout, Mr J Pulford, Mr & Mrs A Reavell, Mr & Mrs S Redmond, Mr & Mrs D Reed, Mrs E Robertson, Mrs M Robins, Mr B Robinson, Professor B S Rosner, Mr & Mrs C Rowe, Lady Rowe, Mr & Mrs J Royle, Miss Amber Rudd, Mr & Mrs L Rumjahn, Mrs P Ryan, Simon the Pieman, Mrs H Simpson, Mrs E Slaven, Mrs J Solly, Mr J Spencer, Mrs T Starkey, Mr & Mrs D G Stone, Miss E Stone, Mr M Stott, Mr C Strangeways & Ms Z Richmond-Watson, Mr & Mrs A P Stuart, Mr & Mrs P Sumner, Mr & Mrs T Nunn, Mr M Taylor, Mrs M Taylor, Mr T Thompson, Mr & Mrs D Tomkinson, Mrs D Tournes, Mrs B M Tuck, Mr W Turner, Mr J Tustin & Mr P Oxley, Mr J Underwood, Mrs E Vere Nicoll, Mrs D Watson, Mr & Mrs P Wege, Mr E Wetherill, Mrs A Whately, Mr & Mrs D Wheeler, Mr K White, Mrs P White, Maj. D A C Wilkinson, Mr I R Williams, Mrs A Wood, Mr & Mrs C Wood, Mr & Mrs J Wood, Mrs M Woodham-Jones, Mrs E Wrenn, Mr & Mrs D Wylson, Mr A Young

## DIARY DATES FOR 2015

Friday 17 April, 11.15am	Annual General Meeting St Mary's Church Centre Annual Lunch The Mermaid Inn
Friday 22 May	Visit to Standen House, East Grinstead, and Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
Sunday 7 June, 2 - 5pm	Annual Garden Party Little Orchard House 3 West Street, Rye TN31 7ES
Sunday, 13 September, 3pm	Society-sponsored talk during Rye Arts Festival, speaker and topic to be confirmed
Late September	Visit, date and place to be confirmed
Friday 4 December, 6 - 8pm	Christmas Celebration Rye Town Hall

### **The Purposes of the Society**

The Society was founded in 1972 and under the Constitution, which it later adopted, is concerned with the area comprising Rye Town, Playden, Rye Foreign, East Guldeford and the Rye Harbour area of the Civil Parishes of Icklesham and Camber.

The principal objects of the Society within that area are: to stimulate public interest in the area, to promote high standards of planning and architecture, and to secure the preservation, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest.

In the course of promoting its work the Society has secured registration as a charity. It is a member of the Sussex Federation of Amenity Societies, the Association of Small Historic Towns and Villages and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Registered Charity No 283888