

# *Wigstons' Voice*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY  
REPRESENTING WIGSTON MAGNA, SOUTH WIGSTON & KILBY BRIDGE  
AUTUMN 2017



Former W. Holmes & Son Factory  
Known as The Europa Building, Newton Lane  
(See article in The Newsletter)

[www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk)

Founded in 1978

*“we strive to make the  
Wigstons a better place  
in which to live work  
and shop”*



## EDITORIAL

Thank you again to those who submitted articles for this edition of the newsletter. Many thanks to Colin Towell who through his articles continues to keep all informed of the changes taking place in Wigston.

Please do not leave it too late to buy your tickets for the Annual Lecture on 14 September (see advert in this issue).

**Peter Cousins**

### WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY COMMITTEE AS ELECTED AT THE AGM MAY 2017

Chairman	Peter Cousins	chairman@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Vice Chair	Maureen Waugh	vicechair@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Secretary	Colin Towell	secretary@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk 07813 782 899
Treasurer	Val Beesley	treasurer@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Val Beesley	membership@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Website Administrator	Peter Cousins	webadmin@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Publicity/Events	Nicola Alexander	publicity@ wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Peter Cousins	news@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Other Committee Members: Roy Hughes, Peter Holmes, Colin Hames, John And Yvonne Woodward		

**Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston Magna, starting at 7.15pm. All Members Welcome**

# RESIDENTS' FORUMS

*note: what is the plural of Forum in Latin?*

There is a Residents' Forum in each of the three areas in the Borough; Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston. The Society tries to ensure that it is represented at the Forum meetings for Wigston and South Wigston. The meetings are held quarterly and they are chaired by a Councillor appointed by the full Council. In the case of Wigston this is Cllr B Boulter and at South Wigston the position is vacant at the time of writing. Agendas are set by the Council with ideas being submitted by Residents. Usually there are a number of formal presentations the first of which is by the police giving a report of the different types of crime in the area in question and responding to Resident's questions on policing. There is a report on grants made by the Forum and an opportunity for residents to make bids for funding for their specific projects (as far as the Society is concerned recent successful bids were to assist with the South Wigston Station plaque and the Willow Park trees). Finally, there is an opportunity for residents to ask questions of the Chairman about situations in the Borough or Council policies.

The Council has provided a budget of £29,000 to Wigston, and £15,000 to South Wigston for 2017-2018. Once agreed by the Forum itself, a bid must be approved by the Council's Policy, Finance and Development Committee before it can be paid.

Currently there is a review of how the Forums operate, which some feel is too informal; with too many unnecessary formal presentations and not sufficient feedback on previous decisions. The Society has responded on the basis of the three questions asked in the review document. The response is as follows:

## **1. How is your Forum currently working for you?**

A. Reasonably well, but there needs to be more accountability for agreed actions and reporting back to the next meeting. Eg, some time ago car washes at Kingston Avenue and Bull Head Street (advertising panels) that were not agreed by planners were operating, this was reported to a Forum but no follow up given and they are still there

B. Too much time spent on unnecessary presentations leaving not enough time for Resident's questions.

## **2 What could your Forum be doing differently?**

- A. Have less formal presentations and put them lower down on the agenda. Is it really necessary to have a police report every time, perhaps this is to tick their boxes and the Councils rather than being of interest to residents?
- B. Have 'Items raised by residents and ideas for future items' at the top of the agenda after the formal apologies and minutes of the last meeting. This would mean that there is less hurry with this item when time runs out.
- C. Have a 'matters arising from the minutes' item so that residents can follow up on decisions and actions from the previous meeting.
- D. Make a clear distinction between 'capital projects update' and 'forum budget update.' Can the distinction be explained?
- E. Have an entirely separate item for spending requests as this currently gets mixed up with budget updates.
- F. Have a more formal procedure for spending requests without making it too difficult, eg brief application form; applicant must speak at the meeting when making the request; requests to be submitted 3 weeks before the meeting and clearly identified in the agenda. In this way residents will not feel hurried to agree on the spot and to appear unhelpful if they disagree with the application.
- G. Publish rules about what activity/cost can be applied for and from which groups. If the application covers the whole Borough, applicants should be made aware that they should approach each forum for a proportion of the money.
- H. Issue draft minutes within 3 weeks (say) of the meeting so that residents can recall what was said and check the draft minutes so that if necessary they can be corrected before the meeting when they are approved.
- I. The constitution/rules for the Forum as incorporated in the Council's constitution to be agreed in a meeting and published

to all residents. It will be necessary to have the same constitution/rules for all three forums.

J. More discussion on Council finances and Council Tax.

K. More discussion on major planning applications and presentations by applicants.

### **3. What could your Forum do to make it more accessible to more residents?**

A. Some time ago it was considered that the word 'FORUM' could be offputting and it was decided to use the title 'Residents' Meeting' Could this title be reinstated?

B. Although it is a good meeting room, going to the Council chamber may put some people off and a more independent meeting room may help. As happens at the other Forums.

C. Better advertising of all the meeting dates for the year by publishing them in Letterbox.

D. Better circulation of the agenda and minutes, OR make people aware as to how to access these documents on the council's website.

## **STREET LIGHTING**

I expect that the lights in your street were changed to LED by the County Council some time ago. In Wigston Fields (oh for the return of those very local area names) the County has recently placed new columns for the LED lights. These are a vast improvement on the old concrete/steel columns. They look better and are higher thereby spreading the downward focused LED light over a wider area. The old columns caused large areas of shadow which did not help drivers or pedestrians. The County's contractors were very slick in carrying out the replacement and completed almost all of our road (seven posts) in one day, and this included a very neat reinstatement of the tarmac round the base of the post.

They did of course use the same lamp section by taking it off the old post and fixing it to the new. I wonder where all the old posts went to? (a lamp post graveyard?)

**Colin Towell**

# HAVE YOU GOT YOUR PRIDE OF THE BOROUGH DISCOUNT CARD?



Pride of the Borough Oadby & Wigston

## Pride of the Borough Membership Card Scheme 2017.

Pride of the Borough is made up of individuals, neighbourhood groups and voluntary organisations whose aim is to improve the borough of Oadby & Wigston.

Our volunteers carry out a range of environmentally based projects, such as maintaining neighbourhood greens, tree and bulb planting, litter picking etc.

We also organise an annual Floral Display Competition and work with Oadby & Wigston Borough Council to prepare for East Midlands in Bloom, in which we have achieved the prestigious Gold Award and in 2017 are entered into **Britain in Bloom**

We are all volunteers who need you to help us with our aim. You can support our work by becoming a member.

Memberships costs £5.00 per calendar year



## Money saved by members in 2016:

Several people have saved more than £30 at Henry Smith & Hamylton Ltd.

Ken Bailey at Wistow have had many customers who save their membership money in just one visit.

Grange Farm is used by a lot of our members most of whom save between £10/£20 a visit.

Groups of friends meeting at Brocks Hill Visitor Centre and Parklands cafes have saved several pounds during the year.

The Cuisine of India say they can have several PotB Members every evening saving at least £10 per couple.

An Oadby couple went to Lords in South Wigston and saved over £20 on electrical goods.

Some people have bought their card to support Pride of the Borough including a man from Wigston who has then found himself saving over £30 in six months.

See over for full details of latest offers, or please visit our website:

[www.prideoftheborough.org](http://www.prideoftheborough.org)

## JINGLE BELLS

No, I am not yet thinking of Christmas but a recent article in the Daily Telegraph caught my eye, it was about Ice Cream van chimes, to my mind so irritating on a summers day and nowadays not necessary.

The article was saying that although the chimes were popular with youngsters in the fifties to seventies, (I remember) they are now largely in decline. Not so in Wigston Fields I fear as there at least two different chimes often at the same time. In their heyday there were about a quarter of a million vans but now the number has reduced to less than 2500. The article blames double glazing, of all things, because people cannot hear the chimes when inside their houses because of the insulation effects of modern double-glazed windows.

I suspect that there is another reason and that is because ice cream and iced lollies in so many different varieties are so cheaply available, in bulk, in supermarkets. For a change, are we too bothered about the supremacy and influence of supermarkets? I suspect not as I think the noise created by these chimes is very invasive and something we could do without on a summer's day.

In 2013 the Government introduced new regulations allowing chimes to last 12 seconds at a time instead of the previous 4 seconds. Councils themselves are forcing drivers to change their vans every 5 years to help reduce carbon emissions, (have you ever waited in a queue at a van, the fumes are enough to put you off your ice cream) and some Councils have banned the vans altogether to help reduce obesity. I wonder what the policy is in Oadby and Wigston?

Apparently ice cream salesmen are introducing a smart phone app to alert purchasers that a van is in their vicinity, what next I ask? The ice cream van is not dead and they are appearing at festivals and street food events where of course they are stationary and quiet because they have a captive audience.

**Colin Towell**

## PLANNING BRIEFS

There have been some notable planning applications that have concentrated the Society's collective mind in recent months.

Firstly, the application for new external decking and the consequent diversion of the footpath in front of the Horse and Trumpet pub was strongly objected to and the Secretary formally spoke against the application at the planning committee. We objected to both the decking and the footpath diversion. Nevertheless, at a planning committee attended by only five councillors the application was accepted with only one councillor voting against. Are they looking after our heritage I wonder? There now needs to be a diversion order on the footpath which members understood would need to be approved at County level but we now hear that the local council can do this and we are awaiting publication of the order which will allow us again to strongly object. For those that do not know, the footpath in front of the pub that comes out as Little Hill on Newton Lane is the ancient route around the village green and the old main road to London.

An objection has more recently been submitted against the application to build two detached houses in the rear garden of the Old Crown pub in Moat Street. These dwellings would face onto Blunts Lane and they are in the All Saints Conservation area. Although the design of the houses themselves is reasonable we felt that access onto Blunts Lane is sufficient for the application to be refused.

An application for the demolition of the Nautical William pub on Aylestone Lane and the construction of 29 flats was generally welcomed but concern was expressed about the three-storey element to create a statement design on the corner section with Rolleston Road. The application was refused on the grounds that it would overlook existing dwellings.

Meanwhile, work has started on the Meadow Hill development off Cooks Lane by Westleigh. The Society has been invited to submit ideas for street names.

On Newton Lane, it is understood that although full planning was agreed in January the actual permission was not issued until very recently and so we may see some activity after the current crop has been harvested.

There has been no progress on the Hat and Cap factory in Canal Street and in Long Street Wigston both the former working mens' club and the Admiral factory sites appear to have made no progress which does little to enhance this street scene which was made worse when the former Hubert Hall's shop was demolished because it was said that it was unsafe. Work has not yet commenced on the the former Premier Drum site although there has been a recent application for a non-material amendment to the original planning application and so planning work is going ahead.

It is understood that outline approval for the new prison at Glen Parva has been given and that all existing inmates have been moved out.

## **THE PINFOLD**

The Committee of Pride of the Borough (PotB) has asked both the Civic Society and Greater Wigston Historical Society to support and assist it in making more of the Pinfold in Wigston Magna.

For those who do not know, a pinfold was a coral or compound where stray animals such as cattle and sheep could be held until they were collected by their owners in days of old. Most villages had a pinfold and Wigston's was situated on the corner of Moat Street and Newgate End opposite All Saints Church. There is already a standard seat on the site but the PotB are proposing an enhanced seat with an agricultural design on the back, a planting trough and an information board.

A similar seat commemorating WWI has recently been placed in Oadby on Leicester Road in the little park opposite St Peters Church, it is worth having a look at and is very comfortable to sit on. It is hoped that the planting trough can be an original reclaimed and refitted cattle drinking trough.

Work is progressing on the final designs before an application is made for planning permission and funding identified. In this respect, the Civic Society has offered the sum of £50 from its legacy reserves.

## **SHOPS**

We have seen a few shop closures lately in Wigston Magna which has made a dent in our empty shops ratio. Store 21 closed abruptly in early July and Branded in Bell Street has gone the same way. Is this the effect of the Edinburgh Woollen Mills group of shops? We see also that the long running Tartan café is for sale although it is understood that this is because of the owner's personal health reasons.

These closures add to a list of shops already closed which does no good for the feel of the town centre. These include: Heards, since August 2015 although it now has a for sale sign on it; Lords, since June 2016; Nat West bank on Bell Street since July 2016 and Harrison Murray's former premises on Leicester Road closed since December 2015. One wonders why an estate agent cannot relet its own shop? This adds up to six empty shops in a small area.

Despite the closures there have been some new openings this year, Istanbul finally rolled up its shutters; Baxter's Bakery took over Coombs old shop; Buddies café opened in the former Milan café premises and Rockies Deserts is in the former cards and gifts shop on Leicester Road, this has an American theme, has anyone tried it yet? Finally, the Tap and Barrel bar seems to be operating, low key but hopefully profitable.

**Colin Towell**

## **THE EUROPA BUILDING**

Recently myself, my wife Ann and Linda and Mike Forryan were given a guided tour of the former Holmes factory, now known locally as the Europa building on Newton Lane. The company that now own it, Just Hype ([www.justhype.co.uk](http://www.justhype.co.uk)), have done an amazing job in modernising yet preserving the features of the building. There is a gallery of photographs on the Wigston Historical Society website.

**Peter Cousins**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND HERITAGE WALK

A very successful AGM was held on 3 May. There was a good attendance of 23 members and 20 guests. The formal part of the meeting included a comprehensive report by the Chairman on the activities of the past year. This was followed by the Treasurer's report which indicated that after fundraising events and subscriptions the Society had just managed to cover its running costs.

It was agreed that subscriptions be increased to £9.00 from May 2018 and that the financial year end date be changed to 31 March.

There was no change in the officers and existing committee members but John and Yvonne Woodward were elected to the committee, a full list of Committee members appears elsewhere in this edition of Wigstons' Voice.

Following the meeting a presentation of Certificates of Commendation (for the first time this year in frames) was made to: Graham Harrison (Buildrite) Leicester Ltd for Oldershaws Yard in Canal Street; NHS England for the Two Steeples Medical Centre (received by Drs Shaffu and Tobin and Mrs J Sinfield on behalf of the Practices located there) and for the excellent work done on the Europa Building in Newton Lane to Just Hype. It is noted that this company is performing extremely well and is expanding into China turning over £24m in the last 18 months (Leicester Mercury, 8 August 2017).

After the handover, to Jamie Carr, Forward Plans Manager O&WBC, of the schedule of properties to be included in the Council's list of significant buildings jointly prepared by the Civic and Historical Societies there was an interesting short illustrated presentation on Conservation Areas by Justin Webber of the City Council. This was in recognition of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civic Amenities Act in 1967 which enabled the creation of Conservation Areas.

The AGM took place in the week following the Heritage Walk. About 50 people attended the walk and were split into two groups one led by the creator of the Walk, Peter Cousins, and the other by Colin Towell. We were thankful for a dry if a little windy morning and we all finished the walk at the Framework Knitters Museum where coffee and biscuits were

provided. The event led to a useful addition of £160 to Society funds with the Museum also benefiting by £50.

The Heritage walk was in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Conservation Areas, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the blue plaques scheme in Wigston, the proposed additions to the Significant Buildings list in the Borough and Civic Day 2017.

These anniversaries will be further highlighted in the Annual Illustrated Public Lecture on 14 September. See details elsewhere in this edition of Wigstons' Voice.

**THE WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
HAS A NEW UPDATED WEBSITE AT:  
[www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk)**

**The site contains a wealth of local information:**

**Articles About Wigston History**

**Database of All GWHS Bulletins**

**Links To History Sites**

**Details Of All The Society Meetings and Outings**

**Downloadable Free Books And Much More**

**Coming Soon.....**

**Access To The GWHS Archive**

**of over 6,500 pictures**

**Family History Help Service**

**Watch The Website For Details**

# THE URBAN TREE

There are trees for timber and trees in parks streets and gardens - urban trees.

Trees are part of our lives, so much so that we do not give them the attention they deserve. Recognition has been given to them by writers and poets since the time of Adam. Shakespeare loved to lie “under the greenwood tree and turn a merry note”. The Owl and the pussy Cat sailed away to the land where the Bong-Tree grows. By the shores of Gitche Gumee by the wigwam of Nokomis rise the gloomy pine trees.

Think of all the trees in Wigston. How many leaves must there be? A mature English Oak has approximately 700,000 leaves. During daylight hours, the red and blue of the sun’s spectrum is used to take in atmospheric carbon dioxide and to emit oxygen. The green part of the spectrum is not used so it is reflected off the leaves, which makes them green in colour.

When it comes to the environment, trees have such a positive value which balances our negativeness. They stand head and shoulder above us putting us firmly in the shade.

So when it comes to building development it would be thought that trees would have priority. Not so. For feeble excuses, down they come.

So instead of one here and there why not plant trees in groups with a path running through them so that for a second or two the quiet peacefulness can be appreciated.

So many factors have to be considered but unfortunately one of them, here in Wigston, is vandalism. One of the four trees which we planted, with the help of the Borough, earlier this year has had five year’s growth, at a stroke ripped away.

The setting of more trees is the best way to Green up the Borough.

**Colin Hames**



# WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY

## ANNUAL LECTURE 2017

An Illustrated Public Lecture On  
WIGSTON'S SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS  
BLUE PLAQUES AND CONSERVATION AREAS  
(INCLUDING SOUTH WIGSTON)

\*\*\*\*\*

A Presentation by Peter Cousins

THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2017

The Venue: AGE UK  
Paddock Street ,Wigston LE18 2AN

Lecture Starts At 7.30pm  
Tea/Coffee Available From 7.00pm

PRICE £3.00 Per Person Including Tea/Coffee

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To Buy A Ticket  
Telephone 0116 2884638 or 07813 782899  
Limited To 80 Tickets  
Book Early To Avoid Disappointment

[www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk)

## **PUBS - A COMMUNITY ASSET**

The Royal Oak, The Firs, The Queen's Head, the Marquis of Queensberry, and now The Nautical William - readers can add to this list of pubs, in Wigston alone, which have closed in the past decade and were sold for redevelopment or more housing. Those pubs were social meeting places, for relaxing or networking, for entertainment or family celebrations. What can be done to prevent the loss of even more places valued by the community?

There are many other venues which fulfil important social functions as well as their primary purpose: a village shop and Post Office, a park or playing field, a community or youth centre. In recent years, many have been closed or sold for redevelopment. These centres, which are so important for our social life, can now be registered with the local council as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) by a community interest group. Then if the owner of an ACV wants to sell, they must notify the council who will in turn inform the interest group. If they want to be treated as a potential bidder, they are given six months in which to raise funds and prepare a business plan, to save the asset for local people.

Two properties in Oadby have already been registered as Assets of Community Value: the Cow and Plough pub at Stoughton Park, and Highcroft Park. The pub is owned by a small local brewery and is well used by the community. The park, part of the Highcroft estate (near Sainsbury's) built in the mid-fifties, has been registered as an ACV to protect this open space for the enjoyment of future generations.

Is there a pub, a sports field or a community hall near you, that is enjoyed by local people and could be protected by listing as a Community Asset? If so, please contact:

[chairman@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk)

**Maureen Waugh**

# **SOUTH WIGSTON METHODIST CHURCH, BLABY ROAD**

## **AN EXHIBITION CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY**



**OCTOBER 16 - 21 2017**

**Monday to Friday 10.30am to 3.30pm.**

**Saturday 10.00am to 2.00pm**

**CHURCH MEMORABILIA: LOCAL HISTORY:**

**MEMBERS HOBBIES INCLUDING: MODEL STEAM ENGINES:**

**THEATRE MODELS: ART**

**Refreshments Available**

**No Entrance Charge: Donations Welcome**