

February 2016

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## Notice board

A warm welcome to those who have recently joined the society.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, at 7:30 PM at Bailiffgate Museum. We are keen to bring new ideas and skills onto the committee, so please think carefully about what you and others can offer, and use the nomination forms enclosed.

This is also your opportunity to review the year past, and help set the agenda for the year ahead. We are in the process of persuading a prominent local figure to present the prestigious Civic Society Awards for 2015. We hope you will join us.

The next newsletter is planned for early May. All contributions and suggestions are welcome.



## Any Questions

On 25<sup>th</sup> November we held our annual *Any Questions Debate*. We promised another outstanding panel, and a lively discussion of topical local issues. Once again we were relieved to deliver both.

Members asked challenging questions, and there were heartfelt contributions from the floor. But our thanks must go

first to a panel with very different, and thought-provoking views: Rachel Roberts (Town Councillor and recent Parliamentary Candidate); Mark

Brassell (newly appointed Director of Alnwick Garden); Councillor Trevor Thorne (representing Shilbottle on Northumberland County Council); and John Hope (former Police Inspector and successful Local Developer).

The discussion ranged widely:

- What future for an empty retail store on South Road?
- Could Northumberland do more to encourage tourism that benefits local people and supports heritage conservation?
- Would it be a crime to build houses on the Duke's School playing field?
- Should we encourage children to cycle to school, and if so, how?
- Does Northumberland employ enough Conservation Officers?
- Does anyone normal read the strategic planning documents?
- What caused this year's increase in visitor numbers?

We cannot possibly do justice here to all the lines we followed in a wide-ranging debate, but we can draw out some of the themes.

We tend to underestimate the value of what we already have, particularly in comparison to other local

towns. That includes both assets such as the Playhouse *"perhaps the best local arts venue in the country"* and the retail offer *"Alnwick does pretty well for this population size and profile"*.

That's not to deny that there are issues. Passions ran high on threats

to build on the Duke's School Playing Field *"over my dead body"*, and support for local business *"it's harder to buy local produce here than it is in London"*, *"we have to draw more*

*people into the town"*. But other concerns were universal. *"kids spend too much time not moving around"*.

There are limits to what can be done. *"it's hillier than most places, and we can't do much about that"*.

So what can we do?

We can learn from others. *"we need to look at how other towns have done it"* *"Blyth has got a lot of cycle-paths (I said cycle-paths)"*.

We need a local voice, more impetus, new thinking: *"we must raise our game"* *"when something is failing you need to be radical"*.

It's also important to work together.

Taking just a few extracts from the discussion of links between tourism and the community: *"create a place that people want to live in, and people will want to visit"* *"it's not just Robson Green that brings in visitors, it's also encouragement by individuals"*, *"tourism needs to show how it benefits the community"*, *"businesses want visitors to have a good experience"*, *"conservation is key"*, *"buildings must be cared for"*, *"keep the town clean, tidy and attractive"*.

We were never going to agree on everything, but we are not going to argue with any of that.

Our thanks to all involved.

**“** When I tell people **”**  
that I'm from  
Alnwick they say 'what a  
lovely place to live'.  
Nobody ever says that  
about Morpeth.

# Lane survey: St Michael's Lane

In 1995 the Civic Society made a study of the public lanes that link Green Batt to the centre of the town. The society wanted to draw attention to the importance of the lanes, and the need to make them attractive and safe, in a manner compatible with best conservation practice.

The Lane was originally known as Willow Walk; it is thought to have acquired its present name after 1820, probably because of the presence of St Michael's Pant at its northern end.

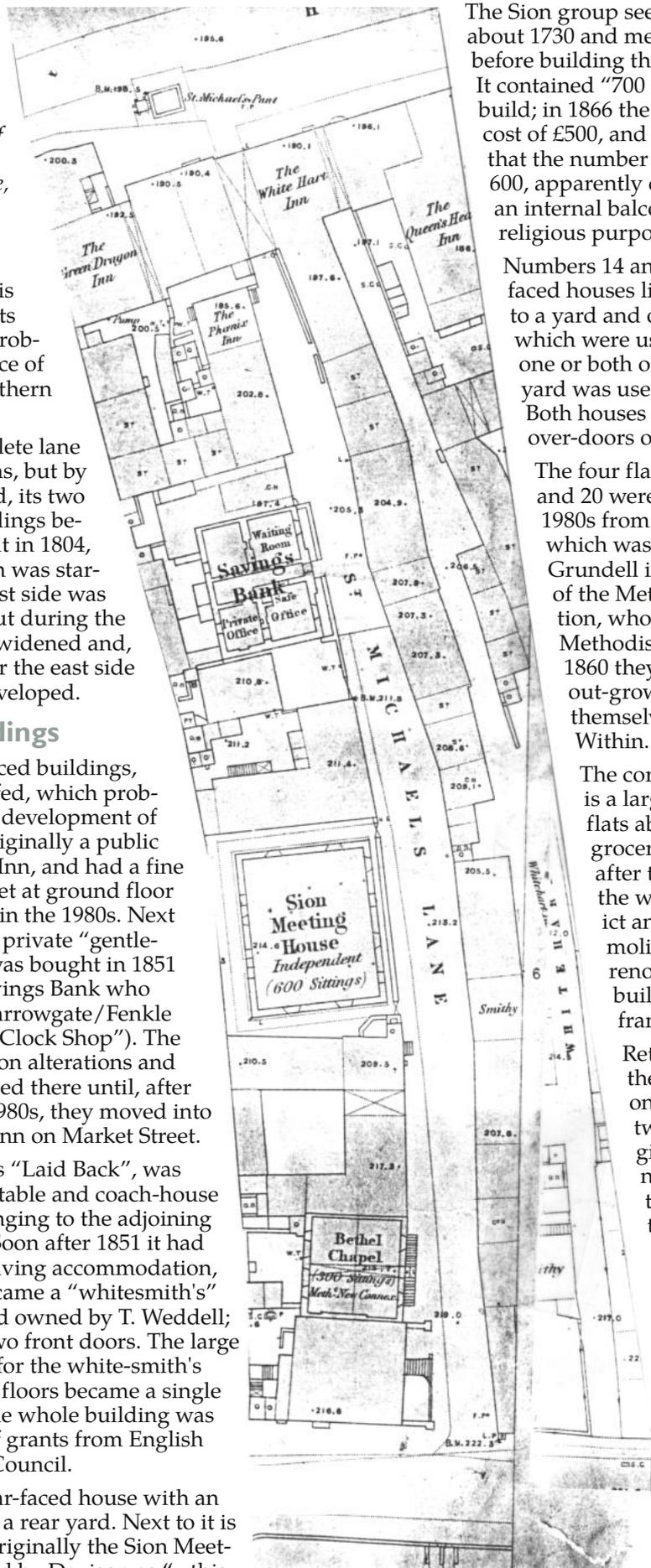
There is no sign of a complete lane on the 1774 map by Wilkins, but by 1827 it was fully developed, its two most important early buildings being the Bethel Chapel, built in 1804, and the Sion Chapel which was started in 1815. In 1866 the west side was much as we see it today, but during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the road was widened and, since the second world war the east side has been completely re-developed.

## History of the Buildings

Numbers 2 and 4 are terraced buildings, ashlar-faced and slate-roofed, which probably date from the earliest development of the lane. Number 2 was originally a public house called The Phoenix Inn, and had a fine bow window onto the street at ground floor level until it was removed in the 1980s. Next (Numbers 6 and 8) came a private "gentleman's residence", which was bought in 1851 for £700 by the Trustee Savings Bank who moved there from their Narrowgate/Fenkle Street premises (now the "Clock Shop"). The Bank spent a further £200 on alterations and improvements and remained there until, after an armed robbery in the 1980s, they moved into what had been the Globe Inn on Market Street.

Number 10, known now as "Laid Back", was originally a single-storey stable and coach-house with a hayloft above, belonging to the adjoining "gentleman's residence". Soon after 1851 it had another storey added for living accommodation, while the ground floor became a "whitesmith's" shop dealing with lead and owned by T. Weddell; this is the reason for the two front doors. The large hearth and chimney used for the white-smith's trade still exist. Later both floors became a single dwelling, and in 1994/5 the whole building was renovated with the help of grants from English Heritage and the District Council.

Number 12 is a small ashlar-faced house with an additional door leading to a rear yard. Next to it is a warehouse, which was originally the Sion Meeting House. It was described by Davison as "...this elegant and commodious place of worship, belonging to the Protestant Dissenters".



St. Michael's Lane in 1866

The Sion group seem to have been founded in about 1730 and met in a succession of premises before building this Meeting Place in 1815/16. It contained "700 sittings" and cost £1,972 to build; in 1866 the interior was re-modelled at a cost of £500, and the map of that year shows that the number of "sittings" was reduced to 600, apparently due to the abandonment of an internal balcony. It ceased to be used for religious purposes in the 1920s.

Numbers 14 and 16 are terraced, ashlar-faced houses linked by an archway leading to a yard and outbuildings at the rear which were used by tradesmen living in one or both of the houses. In the 1970s the yard was used by a painter and decorator. Both houses have traditional doors and over-doors onto the Lane.

The four flats contained in numbers 18 and 20 were created by conversion in the 1980s from the original Bethel Chapel, which was opened by the Rev John Grundell in 1804 as the meeting place of the Methodists of the New Connection, who had separated from the Methodist Church in 1797. In about 1860 they had 60 members and had out-grown the Chapel, so they built themselves a larger one in Bondgate-Within.

The corner building, number 22/24, is a large, ashlar-faced shop with flats above. Until the 1970s it was a grocer's shop called Muckles, but after this business ceased to trade the whole building became derelict and was threatened with demolition before being bought and renovated by Mr Ken Kim, a local builder. It now offers picture framing.

Returning to the north end of the Lane, the property backing onto the archway and the next two renovated buildings (originally the White Hart Inn) are now part of, and extensions to the Market Street premises tenanted (in 1995) by Gus Carter, the Bookmaker. The width of the road through the archway defines the original width of the Lane.

Virtually all the buildings on the east side erected between 1774 and 1827 have now disappeared with the development of St Michael's Square in the Post-War programme of replacement of sub-standard dwellings. The Square is a three-sided open area with three-storey apartment build-



ings and maisonettes. The fourth side of the square was occupied by the utilitarian two-storey premises of the Northumberland Gazette until it was replaced in 1993 by a terrace of yellow/red brick dwellings built in the Georgian style by Nomad Housing.

In 1995, at the Green Batt end of the Lane, on the east side, was a red-brick corner shop, built in the 1950s. Its security requirements had caused the windows to be blanked out, and this, combined with the use of plastic materials and garish colours in the advertising of the shop and its contents made it an eyesore, completely out of keeping with the remainder of the buildings in the Lane (photo above). Replacing this shop has been the most significant change in the last 20 years, and a welcome improvement.

### Suggestions for improvement

In 1995 the society found the attractive arched entry to the lane from Market Street gave an impression of the width of the whole lane in former times. This is now (rightly) closed to traffic. The buildings which flank it and those setts that remain are part of its character, but the view is spoiled by the concrete surface which replaces or overspreads the original setts (photo, below left).

The recommendation in 1995 was that the narrow part of the lane within the archway should have its setts restored, to the southern edge of the projecting building on the west side, and that the unattractive and inappropriate concrete road should be replaced or overtopped with a textured surface material. Sadly, it's hard to tell now whether the photograph to illustrate the problem is from twenty years ago, or today. Outside the Sion Chapel the wide strip of tarmac on the west side between the footpath and the road still provides spaces for car-parking, and still gives a poor visual impression. In 1995 the Society suggested replacing this by setts or cobbles, with an avenue of trees to break up its length and soften its appearance.

There were a number of relatively small-scale improvements proposed in 1995, including the front garden at "Laid Back", which was described at the time as "an eyesore". The recent fencing probably isn't the solution they had in mind.



The most significant improvement since 1995 has been the construction of Bow House

and adjoining properties to replace the shop on the corner of Green Batt. This development by David Taylor has been welcomed as an improvement to the streetscape at a prominent location.



**St Michael's Lane: original character**

Care was taken to follow the historic building line, and remain consistent with the general scale and character of the surrounding buildings. Bow House has since become one of the most highly rated B&B establishments in the town.

There hasn't been the same progress with the long-standing issue of cement-rendered stone on the buildings opposite, on St Michael's Lane. The 1995 report called for carefully removing the cement render / mortar and properly repairing the underlying stonework. That call has gone unheeded.

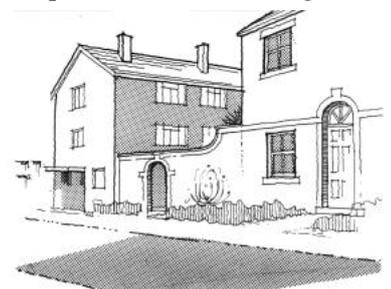
Twenty years ago the society described the new housing and tree planting on the east side of the lane as "disappointingly trite in design", and St Michael's Square as "a combination of some of the worst features of poor environmental design in a modern development: useless grass, a poor entrance to low-grade municipal housing, and ad hoc parking of private and commercial vehicles". Today we may be more accepting, but even at the time it was recognised that little could be done to restore the



original character of the lane (photograph above, right). Instead an arched pedestrian entrance was suggested (sketch below, right).

Today, the Grade-II listed former Sion Chapel is no longer in use as a warehouse or motor factors. Proposals were approved in Oct 2015 to convert it to four apartments, with another apartment in an adjoining building. We felt the application lacked detail, but we concur with the conservation officer in finding both the principle of conversion and the overall concept acceptable.

The devil will be in the detailed design and execution. Sensitively handled this development will provide a viable future, and hence protect an important listed building that features in the Inspired Alnwick Trail. It should enhance the streetscape in one of our most significant historic lanes. Hopefully, such an important investment in the lane will help to stimulate other long-awaited improvements.



# News in Brief

We start 2016 with a larger body than we could boast 12 months ago. Not because we have over-indulged, or under-exercised this winter, but because 2015 was a positive year for recruiting new members. We welcome you all, and look forward to working with you during what promises to be a busy and interesting year. We hope you will join us for our AGM (Details on Page-1) and contribute to our work on the Neighbourhood Plan Community Action Proposals (right).

The Society has been involved with the Alnwick Town Council Sustainable Travel Working Group, which has been exploring the various options for safe walking and cycling routes to the new High School. There are not going to be any easy solutions, but the group has welcomed some recent developments in the neighbourhood of the school, and it is heartening to see this effort

carried forward, with the backing of a broad group of committed local stakeholders.

The Town Team is working towards publishing an updated Town Trail in 2016. The Society's contribution (led by David Lovie) has been to help update and revise the text. We look forward to seeing the result, and hope it will continue to interest and attract visitors, and raise awareness of both our prominent, and our lesser-known landmarks.

Work on the Lunch Box in the Market Place seems to be nearing completion. It will be a relief to many when we see this well-known building return to normal.

The Duke of Northumberland has been urged to abandon plans to build houses on an allotment site, just out-

side his estate. The allotments have been tended for more than a century, and are seen as a valuable asset by the community. More than 500 have signed a petition opposing the plans.

Keep Calm! This is happening in Isleworth, outside Syon Park, so it lies well outside our remit.

If you haven't yet decided which of the Community Action Proposals you would like to participate in (article, right), then perhaps you can help to organise future events and initiatives. With a growing membership, and a busy year ahead we would like to add a second spring event, and do something memorable for our Summer Outing this year. There is no shortage of imaginative ideas, but we need willing hands to help make these reality.



## Quiz: Housing Land

The Northumberland Local Plan estimates that Alnwick will need another 1,100 houses.

To ensure that there is enough land available, the County has to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

The SHLAA doesn't approve or impose housing. It aims to establish realistic assumptions about availability, suitability and economic viability of land to meet the identified need.

These pictures illustrate six of the potential sites that have been identified in Alnwick. Together these account for around 450 homes.

The various Greensfield developments account for around 300, and another 150 or so are already approved or under way, so these are important potential sites for housing.

Can you say where these six sites are?

The answers, and more details of each site, are on the back page.



# Neighbourhood Plan: Community Action Proposals

The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan is moving towards a referendum later this year. Assuming it is approved the Civic Society is committed to support and lead a range of different Community Action Proposals.

And that's where you come in.

This is an opportunity for the society to make a positive and lasting contribution to the future of the town. Among other things, we will be asked to assess the current condition of some of the most important aspects of the townscape, and prepare proposals to maintain and enhance them. We will be invited to contribute to enhancing the vitality of the town centre, and preparing a register of the less-well protected assets.

These are issues that go to the heart of why we all joined the Society in the first place, and that justify our continuing support. So we look forward to receiving enthusiastic support from across the membership. To make sure we are ready we will put in place two workstreams in 2016.

- One workstream will develop the capability we need to appraise key aspects of the townscape. The important qualities for joining this group are pride in our town, and a determination that future generations will see it presented at its best. The group will lean heavily on anyone with expertise in heritage conservation, planning, and urban design.

- The other workstream will reach out to partner organisations, and build on our existing relationships with like-minded groups in the town, with planning and conservation professionals, and with neighbouring bodies in the Civic movement. The important qualities for this group are charm and influential contacts, but anyone lacking in either of those will also be welcome for their drive and determination.

Please let us know which of these two workstreams you would most like to contribute to, and we will be in touch with further details. Let us know too, when your friends and neighbours express an interest.

## Consultation on Boundary Changes

The electoral arrangements of Alnwick Town Council and Denwick Parish Council are currently being examined with a view to changing the parish boundary. Alnwick Town Council has proposed a boundary change to the south of Alnwick to incorporate an area of land which falls within Denwick (detached). This area will include the new Alnwick Duchess Community High School, new housing, extra care housing and sports facilities at Greensfield, Alnwick. If agreed, then any changes will come into force in May 2017.

We have supported the proposed change but suggested that the additional area should be extended to include the industrial area (both present and as proposed in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan) to the east of the A1 at

the South Road/Shilbottle road junction with the A1. In our view the logic for including the newer residential areas in Alnwick applies equally to businesses which look first to Alnwick town for their employees, customers and services. We believe that under present legislation the pecuniary effect of such a change would be nil but if future legislation was to result in a direct income from business rates for town and parish councils it would be more equitable if this area was part of the town council area.

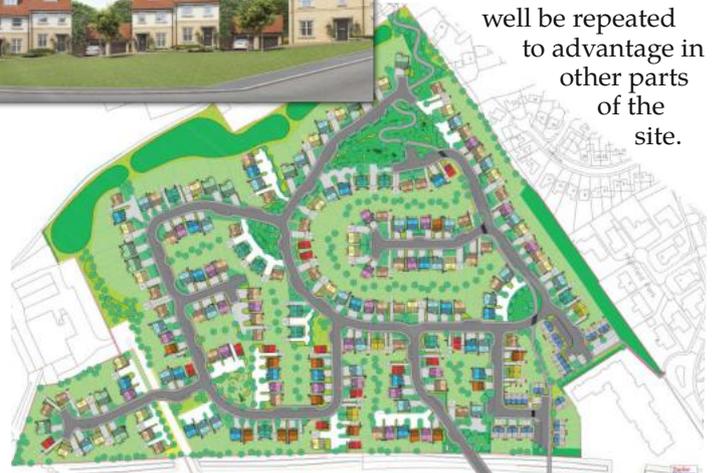


## Greensfield Residential Development: Our comments

Building over 235 houses on this open field represents a major visual and functional extension of the south-western suburban fringe of Alnwick. The site dips to the east from the Greensfield farm ridge making any new development on the site particularly visible from the A1, Northumberland's main north-south traffic artery, as well as from the network of public footpaths in the open landscape around the site. Unfortunately, the proposed landscaping and building design is not up to the challenge of comfortably settling the development into the present landscape nor of providing a suitably distinctive townscape on this large site. Far from mitigating the impact of mass building in the landscape, the proposed peripheral planting is in rows or small groups rather than substantial buffers – and much of this planting, like the rest throughout the development, is in private gardens which in the future will be subject to the removal by individual householders. The proposed dense planting buffer along the north-eastern edge, presumably for local privacy purposes, unfortunately blocks from wider public view the one significant landscape feature which is the open view of the historic Greensfield farm and its ridge. Here little or no screening in front of the farm buildings and southwards along the ridge would be more appropriate. Regarding building design and materials, the intention is to borrow architectural references from various periods of existing building development in Alnwick, presumably to reflect the distinctiveness of the local streetscape.

Unfortunately, the house designs and resulting streetscapes exhibit far too many local references in such an extensive pallet of materials and architectural features that any desirable distinctiveness that might have been achieved in the new scheme, has been lost. Of all the four Streetscape locations presented to illustrate the attractive character to be achieved in the new streets, only Location-4 shows any merit in its limited pallet of materials, scale and building design – the others are little more than a discordant rows of standardised house types which display little visual unity.

The visual lessons and resulting distinctiveness of Location-4 could well be repeated to advantage in other parts of the site.



# ADNP Consultation

*An enormous amount of effort has gone into developing the Neighbourhood Plan over the last three years, and it will influence developments for a generation to come. In November 2015 the plan reached the final stage of consultation before independent examination and the local referendum. It is an impressive piece of work, which deserves public support.*

*Others might have shied away from some difficult issues, but the ADNP team didn't. We applaud them for that. In the same spirit, our comments emphasise areas where we feel there is still scope to find a better solution to some of the remaining challenges.*

## Housing

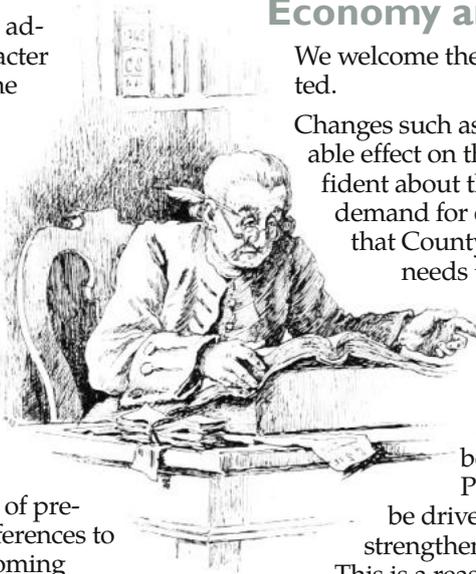
We are concerned about the impact of an additional 1,100 new dwellings on the character of Alnwick, in particular the impact on the landscape setting of the town and traffic and transport. We recognise that the housing requirement in the neighbourhood plan is based on emerging policies in the Northumberland Core Strategy. This requirement has not yet been finalised - more work on housing land availability needs to be undertaken and the core strategy remains to be tested at examination. This uncertainty should be recognised by the neighbourhood plan.

We support the priority given in the first five years of the plan to the development of previously developed land. We welcome references to the possibility of middle school sites becoming available for development. The County has made recent announcements on the subject. The potential for the Duke's Middle and Lindisfarne Middle school sites to accommodate new housing should be considered further before the plan is finalised. A major consideration in assessing the potential for development on the middle school sites will be the need to prevent the loss of valued green space. The school playing fields are important not just for their contribution to outdoor sports provision but also their contribution to the attractiveness of the local landscape. The Dukes School playing fields present a great opportunity to extend Swansfield Park and create a town park worthy of a town the size of Alnwick.

We are concerned about the impact of further greenfield development on the character of the town, in particular the development land east of Allerburn Lea. The plan identifies a number of constraints to development of the site. It under-states, however, as yet unresolved access issues. The County's current (October 2015) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) refers to limitations on housing capacity if a single access is provided. It also refers to the need for a transport plan and to concerns of the Highways Agency about the impact of development on the strategic highway network. The SHLAA suggests a capacity of 250 dwellings, not 270 as referred to in the neighbourhood plan. The plan should be amended to include the uncertainties referred to in the SHLAA.

Land south west of Ravensmount and Alnmouth Road is allocated for housing development in the Neighbourhood Plan. The most recent SHLAA indicates that this site is unsuitable for development. The allocation should be removed from the plan.

We agree that there is a great need to secure affordable housing in the plan area. The increasing number of second homes and holiday lets in Alnwick has made the provision of afford-



able housing even more important. Based on recent levels of delivery by way of the planning system, however, the Society is sceptical about significant provision being able to be achieved in practice. We are concerned about the desirability of removing permitted development rights to prevent affordable housing being extended or enlarged. This might restrict the ability of families to meet their changing needs without moving home.

Housing Design Policy should require that new development takes account of the unique historic character of the area and its special landscape setting

## Economy and Employment

We welcome the overall economic direction that is presented.

Changes such as dualling of the A1 will have an unpredictable effect on the local economy, so it is difficult to be confident about the accuracy of any estimate of future demand for employment sites. However, we recognise that County forecast is the basis on which the ADNP needs to work, and we accept the logic behind the planned location of additional sites.

The stated aim of this section is to support, strengthen and diversify Alnwick as the principal employment and service centre for the wider area. Both the Neighbourhood Plan and Northumberland Local Plan assume that economic development will be driven primarily by growing tourism and strengthening the role of Alnwick as a service centre.

This is a reasonable ambition. However, in practice, both of these plans are primarily concerned with facilitating and enabling economic development. Local bodies will need to go further in promoting local economic development, and overseeing the impact on our local economy of arms-length and regional bodies such as Northumberland Tourism and The North-East Rural Growth Network. The community action proposal to promote all year round and all weather tourist attractions and facilities is welcome, but addresses only part of this need.

For overall consistency, we would have liked to see more recognition in this section of the inherent tension between the need for economic development outside the town centre and the need to maintain a vibrant economy within the town centre. However, this issue is addressed in the section on Town Centre and Retail. In that section we welcome the strengthening of policy on Out of Centre Retail.

Ideally we would have liked this section of the plan to go further in addressing the need to mitigate the impact of economic development on the quality of the landscape and townscape. However, we welcome the Community Action Proposal in this section to encourage high standards on major approaches, and we note that the same issue is touched on elsewhere (e.g. Community Action Proposals to Carry out a visual appraisal of key approaches, and Develop design guidelines for new development on the key approaches).

Positive support for development of an appropriate local skill base will be essential underpinning for economic development. We are encouraged by the introduction of a Community Action proposal to promote training for traditional and newly developed skills.

## Town Centre and Retail

This section touches key challenges in the local economy, employment,

Continued opposite...

# Planning matters

Sadly, an application to install a gas supply pipe to the first floor flat at Grannies Tearoom has been approved despite our objection.

We left it to others to comment on proposals for Narrowgate House / General Lambert's House and were not disappointed. Comments from neighbours covered the spectrum of dilemmas that surround this development. Historic England recognise that the proposal promises a considerable public benefit in the form of historic environment conservation, and feel that it balances sensitivity with pragmatism, but want to see a formal agreement to ensure that profit realised from the new houses goes into repair of the main house. The Conservation Officer supports the overall approach, regrets loss of the Coach House, but finds the overall scheme acceptable in principle. They demand mechanisms to ensure that the principal heritage asset is repaired and brought back into use, with detailed conditions regarding final finishes, and conservation repair methodologies, alongside continual dialogue with the planning authority and conservation officer. The aim being to ensure the building is fully repaired and the site enhanced as a valuable contribution to the economy and vitality of this part of the Alnwick Conservation Area. A more pragmatic approach in the past might have achieved this result sooner.

## ADNP Consultation (continued from previous page)

tourism, transport, community facilities and housing, as well as themes which most preoccupy members of the Civic Society, such as conservation of our heritage, and quality of the streetscape. The Civic Society has long argued for a more radical approach to development of our town centre (and will no doubt continue to do so) but the overall direction here is both appropriate and comprehensive. We particularly welcome the emphasis on integration between this, and other topic areas.

In that context, we believe that it is right for this section to be setting ambitious objectives. The need to foster an integrated approach to the stewardship and development of the Town Centre will be the key to realising these. There is a Community Action Proposal for a three-year rolling plan which covers: improving accessibility and pedestrian flows; developing public facilities and use of public spaces; encouraging independent retail outlets; and actively promoting the Town Centre. We support this approach, but we anticipate that this will be a complex programme, involving different stakeholders with a variety of perspectives. Recent history suggests that progress will be difficult to achieve. However, much in the overall plan depends on the success of this programme, and expectations will be high. We urge the ADNP core team and the Town Council to ensure that the team leading this action has sufficient resources and capability in place to deliver the desired outcomes.

### Transport

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes an increase of the order of 25% in the housing stock in Alnwick by 2031. Inevitably, much of that expansion will take place on the fringes of the town, especially to the south. As such, it will have a disproportionate effect on the level of movement by vehicles (cars and public transport) and other mechanical means (including bicycles). Yet, as we argued in our comments on the previous draft of the plan, there is no proper analysis of the likely transport implications of the proposed levels and location of growth.

This will lead to further congestion, especially during the tourist season, and a lowering of the quality of the environment on the main approaches to the town centre, most notably



A reserved matters application has been submitted for new dwellings at Greensfield and we have commented in some detail (see page 5).

We felt no comment was necessary on proposals to prune protected trees at Bullfield Community Orchard, or a garage at Croft Place (since withdrawn). Similarly with replacing timber with upvc windows at Anchor Housing in Church Lane (though this sets a concerning precedent).

An application has been submitted for the construction of two new dwellings and the conversion of the farm stabling to create a third additional dwelling on land South West of Greensfield Farm. No representations were considered necessary.

Our views differed on proposals for changes to Greggs, but new signage and lighting on The George were felt to be an improvement, and no comment was necessary on either.

Development Proposals at the rear of 12 & 14 Bondgate Within are associated with Grade II Listed Buildings, within the conservation area. However, the development is at the rear and brings investment and housing into the centre of the town so we felt no comment was necessary.

on South Road and Wagonway Road. This problem is about to be exacerbated by the relocation of the High School and now half of the catchment area middle school population to the south of the town.

It could also lead to further loss of local trade in the town centre as local people find it easier to access shops and businesses at Willowburn, leaving town centre businesses even more dependent on a seasonal tourist trade.

If major growth is to be allowed, the plan should be more explicit in requiring developers to contribute (probably through section 106 agreement) to improving the wider transport network and not just in the vicinity of their development.

We should make it clear that we support most of the transport policies in the plan and we are not advocating major additions to the highway network. Instead, we need a proper segmented market analysis of future transport needs, especially for tourists and for people for whom Alnwick is their focus for shopping and business. In order to accommodate them, travel within Alnwick needs to be effectively managed and as it stands, the plan does not adequately do this.

Although this section of the plan has been altered following the Autumn 2014 consultation, we are disappointed to see that little or no regard has been paid to our comments, both in relation to the section as a whole and to individual policies. We stand by those comments.

### Environment

We support policies to safeguard existing green space, particularly the middle school playing fields.

The designation of the Duke's School Playing Fields as Local Green Space is very much supported. The area identified on the Proposals Map should be extended to the north to enable the creation (in conjunction with the existing Swansfield Park) of a town park of a size and quality currently not available to the local community. Reference to the Duke's School Playing Fields should be amended to refer not just to the value of the mature trees but also the general contribution of the open space to the quality of the local environment and landscape.

## Diary dates

### Civic Society...

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, at 7:30 PM at Bailiffgate Museum. This is your opportunity to review the year past, and help set the agenda for the year ahead. It is going to be a busy year, and we are keen to bring new ideas and new skills onto the committee. There is more than one vacancy, so please give some thought to what you, and others, may be able to contribute. Nomination forms are enclosed, and more are available if you need them.

We are in the process of persuading a prominent local figure to present the prestigious Civic Society Awards for 2015 at the AGM. We hope you will join us.

Look out for further information on a second spring-time event.

The next ACS Newsletter will be published in early May. By then we hope to announce plans for a memorable Summer Outing.

### ...and more

Bailiffgate Museum until 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. Finding Your Place: features photographs, videos and audio recordings from several successful community projects run in the Alnwick area, exploring how people's lives and locations have changed over the last century. Includes an exhibition of all shortlisted entries from the "Shots from the Heart" 2015 photography competition.

Newcastle Lit & Phil Society, 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016, 7:00pm: The Civic Movement across England. Ian Harvey, joint founder and Executive Director of Civic Voice will talk about the past, present and the future of the civic movement across England. The civic society movement dates back to 1846 and this will be your opportunity to learn how one of the country's oldest social movements is as still relevant today as it was when the first civic society was created. Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement and was established in 2010. Tickets cost £12 for members of the Northumberland and Newcastle Society, and £14 for guests and include a light buffet and drink of wine/soft drink

## About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in 1974, following the defeat of proposals to re-develop the town centre with a modern shopping area. Since then it has sought to influence development proposals, especially in the town centre and conservation area, to ensure they protect and enhance our heritage.

The society has been involved in successful high profile campaigns. It continues to pursue its objectives and provide a voice for members: through dialogue with planning and conservation professionals, and like-minded organisations; by offering advice, scrutinising and commenting on development proposals; and by recognising excellence, organising public meetings, developing guided trails, and a variety of other activities.

In response to changes in the planning system the society has been heavily involved in development of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and works with local partners to influence policy at a county level. It seeks to influence national policy in co-operation with other bodies within the civic movement, and was a founding member of Civic Voice.

All who share our aims can support the work of the society: by joining as an individual, family or business member; by participating in activities, sharing ideas, raising areas of concern and pointing out examples of good practice. Or simply by demonstrating pride in our town, and spreading the word about the value of our work.



### Who's Who?

**President:** Philip Deakin

**Chair:** Peter Ennor ([peter.ennor@gmail.com](mailto:peter.ennor@gmail.com))

**Treasurer and Membership:** Gill Parker

**Honorary Secretary:** Sue Smith

**Other Executive Committee members:**

Elizabeth Jones

Brian Lamb

David Lovie ([davidlovie307@btinternet.com](mailto:davidlovie307@btinternet.com))

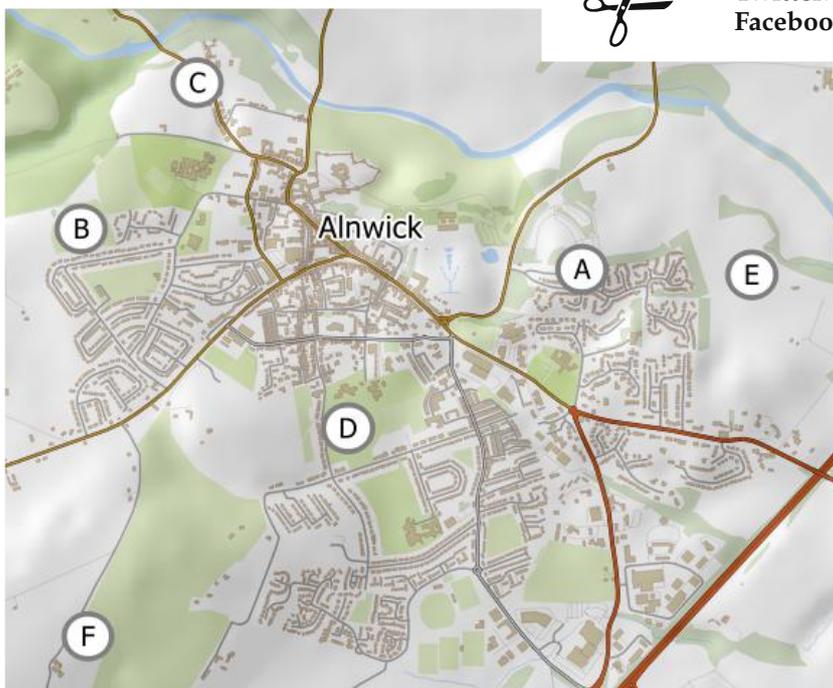
Peter Reed / Newsletter ([peter.reed@aligre.co.uk](mailto:peter.reed@aligre.co.uk))

Caroline Stewart

**Web:** [www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.alnwickcivicsociety.org.uk)

**Twitter:** @AlnwickCivicSoc

**Facebook:** [AlnwickCivicSociety](https://www.facebook.com/AlnwickCivicSociety)



### Quiz answers

- A) Allerburn House, potentially 20 homes deliverable in 6-10 years
  - B) Listed as: Land at Cricket Ground, potentially 69 homes deliverable in 6-10 years (actually Football Ground west of Barresdale)
  - C) Land NW of St Michael's Church, potentially 32 homes deliverable in 11-15 years
  - D) Duke's Middle School potentially 72 homes deliverable in 11-15 years
  - E) Land East of Allerburn Lea, potentially 100 homes in 6-10 years and a further 150 in 11-15 years
  - F) Listed as: Land SW of Swansfield Park, potentially 15 homes deliverable in 6-10 years (off Rugby Road, North of Intake Farm)
- For a detailed map see:  
<http://map.northumberland.gov.uk/SHLAA/>