

May 2018

Contents

Notice Board.....	1
Annual General Meeting.....	1
Letter to the Chair.....	2
Telling Tales.....	3
From the archives.....	3
Planning matters.....	4
Northumbria Garden Trust Comments.....	5
News in brief.....	6
Quiz: Pointless signs.....	7
About Alnwick Civic Society.....	8
Who's Who?.....	8
Diary dates.....	8

Notice board

By kind permission of Mr and Mrs Davison, our summer outing this year is to Lilburn Tower on the 9th June. The property is a Grade II* listed building, designed by John Dobson, and not normally open to the public. Contact a member of the committee if you would like to participate.

Have you paid your subscription for 2018? We do check, but we don't like to hassle those who forget. Most individual and family members find it convenient to pay by standing order at the start of the year.

The Society will be offering guided walks round Alnwick's historic town centre on Northumberland Day (27th May). See our web site for details of the walks, and <https://northumberlandday.co.uk> for other activities.



Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on 21st March at St James Centre, Alnwick. Nineteen members of the Society attended.

Peter Ennor's report on the previous year centred on the "Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes" (SAHH) project. This included publication in November, although work on training, distribution and walks continued. The reception had been wholly positive and gratifying and made the effort worthwhile.

Meanwhile the usual activities of the Society continued. The Neighbourhood Plan had been "made" in July and immediately faced its first test, on the proposal to build housing on Willowburn Trading Estate, contrary to the plan. Other planning applications considered during the year included one for Lilidorei, the play park in the castle grounds. This had been withdrawn in the face of objections, including one of the most strongly worded objections from Historic England seen by the Society. However, a re-application had been submitted. The Society had objected to applications for housing at Windy Edge and retail development on Willowburn Avenue. Peter considered that Northumberland Estates alone were in danger of filling Alnwick's quota of new housing before the plan period was even half over.

A further traffic survey revealed that whilst traffic at the south end of Willowburn Avenue had not increased as much as anticipated, traffic on Wagonway had increased as anticipated by well over 30%.

A summer visit to Alnmouth for tours of the village and the Friary had been enjoyed by a good number of members in spite of the weather. In October another lively Any Questions session had been held. Gill Parker and Trish Jones, had continued to tidy up around the Column. Mary Hipwell had ably organised a successful Christmas shop window competition which had helped to raise the Society's profile locally.

Peter thanked members of the Executive Committee for their work over the year, and considered that all in all, for a small society, 2017 had been a year to be proud of. As Treasurer, Gill Parker reported that the Society had 25 single members, 11 joint members, 5 business members and 15 honorary members.

Peter Ennor, Gill Parker and Sue Smith were re-elected as Chair, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary respectively. Elizabeth Jones, David Lovie, Peter Reed, John Hipwell and Mary McIlroy Hipwell were re-elected as members of the Executive Committee.

After conclusion of the formal business the Chairman introduced Cliff Pettit, a retired local solicitor and founder member of the Society, who entertained the meeting with a personal account of life in Alnwick in the early 20th Century. Cliff described how the town had been largely contained within the line of the old town walls, and residents had a rather introverted and enclosed mentality. World War 1 brought changes, particularly the establishment of a large Army camp on the Pastures. The presence of 6,000 troops had a major social effect and broadened the outlook of local people. Some soldiers returned because they liked the town, married local women (or both).

Cliff gave an amusing account of the victory parade held in 1919 when formal proceedings were disrupted by unruly behaviour, including singing and dancing by members of the Royal Naval Division.

Cliff's mother had been the daughter of an Alnwick Freeman, and Cliff lived in Green Batt House and attended the Borough School before gaining one of only 30 places at the Duke's Grammar School. He recalled significant social division at the time and considered that he had a more fortunate life than most. Many people lived in dire straits in slum property and certain rough areas had to be avoided. As a solicitor, Cliff had later been involved in the compulsory purchase of land and property for redevelopment. He had brought with him to the meeting a number of old maps from the time and concluded his talk by inviting us to have a look. The maps revealed a picture of Alnwick in past times including property long since demolished, particularly in the many yards to the south and west of the town centre.

After everyone had a chance to examine the maps the Chairman thanked Cliff for his enjoyable and informative talk and closed the meeting.

Letter to the Chair

I found time to read *Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes* sooner than expected. The booklet is a truly marvelous publication, and that is a comment I can make quite independent of any personal connection with some of its content. What an elegant and beautifully designed and illustrated presentation it makes! It is, as book reviewers like to say of a piece of writing they could not put down, It's a page-turner!

At the most essential level, the publication is crammed with interesting observations about Alnwick, its history, people, and townscape that must surely inform longtime residents as well as visitors. As one of the latter, who feels he "knows" Alnwick better than the average tourist, I am delighted with the added knowledge it provides and the way it does it, gilded with pictures both historical and contemporary that makes one wish to return to experience the town again. For me at least it provokes nostalgia far greater than I would have expected. Many statements in the book prompted resort to Google StreetView to check out a particular building or space to be reminded of its present appearance, or to focus on a detail previously unrecognized. For any resident or visitor interested in why Alnwick is one of Britain's visual treasures the booklet is a perfect distillation of intriguing local knowledge, set within a meaningful national context.

The format is attractive, weaving historical phases together with

significant agents and agencies in its formation and interpretation, a nice alternation of broad trends with personalities relevant at points in time when Alnwick was changing. I had never thought to link Shakespeare with Alnwick until I read the comment about his treatment of Hotspur. There are similar felicitous instances throughout the book where the narrative portrays Alnwick as connected to the flow of national history. And what a gallery of significant contributors to the shaping and understanding of Alnwick's history and landscape — what fine company Father finds himself in, from beginning to end!

It is a revelation to me to grasp the full value the booklet attaches to my father's contribution to understanding Alnwick's physical development, and I can only think that the sheer passage of time allows for a pretty mature and measured judgment to emerge after some decades, as in this case. That is not to underrate whatever acceptance his study met with at the time. But, as noted, his Alnwick treatise is a specialized study in urban morphology, the technical scientific aspects of which are unlikely to sustain the general reader. Yet I am struck by the persistent sprinkling throughout the book of references to his interpretation of this feature or that, which speaks to the thoughtful digestion of and judicious selection among his findings by the contributors to the booklet. And I am particularly pleased to note the mentions of his involvement with the Alnwick Society, as I do have a memory of his reports at the dinner table after attending at least some of its meetings. I suspect Father, were he alive, would be uncomfortable with any characterization as a "hero," but he would undoubtedly feel glad that his interest in and findings about Alnwick were considered of value by a later generation of custodians of the town's cultural heritage.

What the booklet has to say about the course of townscape preservation in the decades since his involvement would surely please Father immensely, if for no other reason than that an abstract desire to hold on to Alnwick's priceless resource fell into such capable hands and produced such satisfactory results. It is of special interest to me (because I left for the United States in 1966) to learn now of Philip Deakin's sustained hard work in leading the Civic

Society to champion the planning safeguards that have been put in place since. I recall visiting Alnwick with Father in the late 1990s, and already then he was much more sanguine about the condition and prospects of Alnwick's townscape than those of central Newcastle, given the infamous lobotomy that befell Eldon Square.

The portrait of Father on p. 24 is, as noted in the credits, from my camera. It dates from 1963, when I was studying for a semester at the University of Giessen in Franconia, prior to my degree course at Cambridge. Father was visiting Giessen at the time and participated in a day-long student excursion that included Alsfeld, and the professor of geography leading the excursion, familiar with Father's expertise in European urban historical geography, gave him center stage as interpreter of the town's physiognomy. So this photo, taken from the plinth of the market cross, shows Father expounding on Alsfeld's townscape structure, town plan in hand, deducing its evolution from the evidence at hand (literally!) — just as he did with umpteen visitors to Alnwick who expressed interest in his research. I long ago lost count of the historians, geographers, and architectural historians whom Father took around Alnwick during the 1960s and 1970s. Each visit included detours into the 'pukka' burgages of the town centre, none more so than Teasdale's Yard. I am tickled that your publication obtained this image of Father, as it absolutely typifies how he also showed off

Alnwick to his own personal visitors and colleagues from around the world. What a happy coincidence of purpose and appearance across time and space that this photo should turn up in the book.

It is also a pleasure to see the gravestone included in the Alnwick memoir. In all modesty you have yours truly to thank for this too: in contemplating what would best

symbolize his claim to have made some mark on this earth — and for a geographer, moreover, a claim to a specific place with a compelling character — it seemed clear to me that the motif of Alnwick's town centre ought to be it. I firmly believe he would not have wished it otherwise. I am touched and delighted that this subtle expression of the bond between the man and the town is represented in the book.

I can confirm that Alnwick has continued to gain international prestige in professional circles. To the Chinese edition of the Alnwick book in 2011 there has been added a translation into Italian: *L'analisi della forma urbana Alnwick, Northumberland, Milan: Franco Angeli, 2012*. Beyond this, citations to the study in international literature continue to mount, and not a few professional conferences held in the North East from time to time have featured field trips to Alnwick to view Alnwick's townscape (for example, by the International Seminar on Urban Form which met in Glasgow and Newcastle in 2004).

I've rambled on perhaps too long, but you should know how much I am impressed by this fine publication, and by the recollections it has evoked. And I cannot but be charmed by the fact that I seem to have, unwittingly, contributed a couple of images to the work as well. This little book is a remarkably readable, informative, and beautifully written and produced venture. I truly hope it serves the Alnwick Civic Society and the Bailiffgate Museum well.

Thank you so much for sending me a copy. It will be treasured. And it adds further incentive for me to return again to Alnwick, for which I have an abiding affection, for many reasons.

With best wishes, Michael P. Conzen, Professor of Geography, Committee on Geographical Sciences, The University of Chicago

Michael Conzen is Professor of Geography at the University of Chicago, and the the son of M. R. G. Conzen who featured as one of Alnwick's heritage heroes in our publication "Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes"

From the society's archives

Minutes of a Civic Society Meeting held on Monday 19th April 1982

Cobbles: Mr Deakin outlined the reasons for the Planning Department's alterations in parking on the cobbles. Experimentally it had been a success, but the Department was willing to hear the Society's observations. The committee agreed that the painting of white lines was not a satisfactory solution and that the setting in of different coloured cobbles would be a suitable alternative. It was felt that a systematic plan should be followed over a period of ten years and that the cobbles should be set in earth. As an amenity area had been in the original plans it was suggested that seats should be more preferable than a No Parking sign painted into the cobbles. The committee noted with pleasure that two trees had been replaced, and that the barriers were only temporary and would be removed.

Minutes of a Civic Society Meeting held on Wednesday 6th October, 1982

The secretary reported that Professor Conzen would be willing to speak and the Committee agreed that the White Swan would be a suitable venue if available. It was agreed that a charge of approx £2 would be acceptable, to include a finger buffet and a glass of wine. Prof Conzen was to be asked if he would be available on 26th November, rather than 19th which would clash with other activities. Mr Bloodworth said that the society should think of occasions suitable for young people to try to promote more members.

The Prof. Conzen talk would start at 7:30p.m. 10 tickets would be circulated to each committee member and slips would be delivered to all members.. Mr Gordon said that the library would be pleased to stage an exhibition supplied by the Society and it was agreed that a week on either side of Prof Conzen's talk would be suitable. An exhibition sub-committee was appointed.

Minutes of a Civic Society Meeting held on Monday 17th January 1983

It was agreed that Prof Conzen's talk had been a great success as far as the turnout was concerned, though the talk may have been a bit specialised for the audience. The exhibition at the library had been very popular.

Annual General Meeting of Alnwick Civic Society held on Thursday 17th May 1984

As it was 10 years since the Civic Society was formed, Mr Deakin had decided to outline the achievements over 10 years. He mentioned the Post Office extension, Wingrove House, Display in Bondgate Gallery, the traffic scheme, town plan, County Structure plan, Bondgate carport, Newsletter and Town Trails. He paid tribute to the Northumberland and Newcastle Society and the District Council who were always very co-operative and welcomed the society's observations. The Society had been reviewed in Heritage Outlook as one of the 12 top Civic Societies in the Country.

Telling Tales: Heritage Interpretation Workshop

On the 5th March we ran a Heritage Interpretation Training Workshop with Bailiffgate Museum called "Telling Tales". We were able to offer this at no charge to interested parties, thanks to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the "Some Alnwick Heritage Heroes" project. The initial schedule was disrupted by the "Beast from the East", and the workshop had to be re-arranged at short notice. But despite that it attracted interest from a diverse range of local heritage organisations and individuals.

Heritage interpretation specialist Jo Scott led the half-day workshop. Jo has more than twenty years' experience in the heritage sector. She has helped to plan, develop and deliver interpretive projects across the UK, working at a host of natural and cultural heritage sites including Durham Cathedral, Kielder Water & Forest Park, Newcastle Mining Institute, London's Brompton Cemetery and Gressenhall's workhouse museum in Norfolk. Based on that experience, Jo passed on a wide range of inspiring ideas and practical tools that we can all use to share our heritage stories successfully. Local capacity building was one of the key objectives of the SAHH project, and a significant factor in attracting HLF funding. So it was gratifying that everyone involved has heard some creative and practical solutions for engaging local people and visitors of all ages and interests.

Jo described "interpretation" as the process of transforming what the experts want to tell into what the visitors want to know, and in ways they will enjoy. It's much more than the simple delivery of facts and information; it's a creative process that helps people enjoy and engage with special places, and hopefully to understand and appreciate them better.

After showcasing some exciting examples of best practice, and some memorable examples of "what not to do" the workshop covered:

1. Planning for interpretation (AIM)
2. Understanding our audiences (AUDIENCE)
3. Communicating effectively (MESSAGE)
4. Selecting the right media (MEDIA)



We discussed ideas across a wide spectrum: from cost-effective quick wins to some highly ambitious schemes. With that inspiration, and having been shown a clear structure for thinking through the options, we broke into groups to work on planning practical approaches to the kind of project that any of us might become involved in.

Feedback following the event has been enthusiastic:

"Very very clear to the point" • "Information we could really use, thank you" • "Lots of good suggestions" • "Simple message to communicate complex ideas (a good role model)" • "Clear presentation and a wealth of ideas" • "Very succinct and useful, thanks" • "Very practical" • "Great visuals, clear presentation" • "Helping us to think outside the box" • "Fuel for thought" • "A creative inclusive approach that invites ALL to benefit from our heritage" • "Inspirational"

Planning matters

We were pleased to hear that revised proposals for Allerburn House have been rejected by the Planning Committee. Neighbours had objected that drainage had not been properly considered, the proposals would increase the scale of the scheme, involve demolishing a substantial portion of Allerburn House, introduce town houses of a size that were not in keeping, with adverse visual impact and overlooking neighbours. The Town Council objected on a similar basis, adding that the application did not support the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan policies in terms of Housing Design, and Design in the Wider Town. On balance, officers felt that the landscape impact should not be considered significant, and that the visual impact and the impact on a non-designated heritage asset was acceptable.

The Planning Committee gave three reasons for refusal:

- a significant adverse impact on residential amenity: the proposed town houses overlooked existing residential properties to the south.
- visual impact: the town houses' height, design and massing would have a significant adverse impact on the immediate area and wider landscape
- demolition of extensions to Allerburn House and the erection of town houses would have a significant adverse impact on the setting of the nondesignated heritage asset

We agree.

After extensive discussion the committee chose not to comment on proposals for the flagpole in Column Field, or the application for Alnwick Playhouse.

Further amendments have been made to the plans for Retail Development on Willowburn Avenue. These include removal of partitions inside the big retail unit. As reported previously, we believe this should be rejected on the basis that the ADNP requires the applicant to demonstrate that there is a need for such a development, and to satisfy planners that there are no suitable town centre or edge of centre sites. The case they have made is unconvincing. The site lies directly between a busy junction, and a large school. We do not believe that anyone has sufficient understanding of the cumulative impact of various developments on traffic at this junction.

A revised application has been submitted for housing on Willowburn Industrial Estate following the refusal of permission for a previous application. We have objected to this application and aligned ourselves with the objections of Alnwick Town Council. The application is premature and cynical, coming as it does in advance of the applicants' appeal in relation to the same site with additions.

The site is allocated for industrial use in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan and that is how it should remain. It is vital that employment should be encouraged to expand alongside growth in housing. For young people in Alnwick employment opportunities within walking distance of home are the top priority.

The housing growth envisaged in the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan for the period 2011-2031 was for 1,100 homes. This was based on a Central government projection for Northumberland which has since been reduced by over 40%. If the projected housing growth for Alnwick were reduced commensurately, this would require a total of 660 new households by 2031. In fact, by the end of 2017, only one third of the way through the plan period, over 568 new houses have either been completed, are being built, or have been given planning permission. If the current full

application for Windy Edge alone were to be granted, the total of 660 would be reached in the first half of the plan period, leaving no scope for future developments thereafter. If the Windy Edge outline application were also to be granted, the reduced figure of 660 would be exceeded by over 25% and even the ADNP target of 1,100 homes would be over 75% committed or built, all within the first half of the plan period. This is bad planning but at least Windy Edge is designated for housing in the ADNP. This site is not, and there are other designated sites to fall back on if necessary.

As a community we need to hold on to and nurture our potential employment sites as jobs are vital to a balanced and prosperous future in which just not the elderly and holiday home seekers can afford to buy houses.

A new application has been submitted for the development of a play village to the north of the tree house. Proposals include a large play structure, a hall for events, a chapel and cabins. Attempts have been made to hide the large hall in the landscape but we still have concerns about the visual impact of the development and the effect on the landscape. There is a serious lack of information on the details of the development, particularly the play structure.

Historic England objected to the original scheme, citing substantial harm to the significance of both the registered park and listed castle. They acknowledge that the amended proposal follows discussion with the Council and themselves, and that it proposes a more sympathetic approach that tries to minimise impact, and hide the new buildings with landscaping. However they are not convinced that this approach will be successful. In part this is because the information provided lacks detail and clarity.

Historic England feel there is scope to refine the scheme but consider that it still has the potential to cause considerable harm to the significance of the registered park and listed castle; and does not reflect the importance given to the conservation of highly graded heritage assets. So they maintain their objection. We agree with all that - although we are not so sure that there is scope to refine the scheme.

Northumbria Garden Trust raise similar objections, and their analysis of historic maps is of wider interest so we have included extracts on the opposite page.

A surprisingly large number of people have been moved to express their support for this project. At the time of writing it had gained 177 letters of support on the Northumberland County Council planning web site. Interestingly, 80% of those who wrote in support came from outside Alnwick, and more than half came from outside Northumberland (25% from Tyneside). One came from the U.S.A. On average, those writing in support of the project live almost 40 miles from Alnwick. Alnwick Civic Society represents people who are resident in the town and not visitors who are probably not aware of the wider impact this application would have on Alnwick Castle and parkland and who, if they return in the future, would be exposed to this new disruptive facility for only the duration of their chosen visit.



Northumbria Garden Trust on Play Village



Analysis of the available historic mapping and other documentary sources shows that the valley where the development is proposed was clearly a significant part of the pleasure ground and parkland to the east of the castle from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, making best use of the varying topography to display the changing views from the access rides out to the wider parkland along the river valley. A large built development in the heart of the eastern pleasure ground would sever the historic circulation routes; disrupt the historic division between pleasure ground and parkland; occupy an area intended to be open space in contrast to the planted surroundings; and is clearly not in the interest of preserving the physical remains and understanding of the historic designed landscape and the Northumbria Gardens Trust consequently objects to the proposal.

The Archivist's Statement of January 2018, ... includes an account of 1785 by Peter Wadell of the circulation within the eastern pleasure ground, which combined with contemporary and later mapping gives a good idea of the intention behind the laying out of this part of the designed landscape.

The Ordnance Survey Town Plan for Alnwick of 1851 shows two ponds in the valley to the east of the walled garden ... The ride eastwards from the castle along Barneyside remains within the northern boundary of the pleasure ground and passes into the valley to the north of the larger pond before turning southwards to the gate on Denwick Lane. A spur ride leaves this on the eastern side of the large pond and leads away north eastwards to circuit "Oak Grove" the further extent of the pleasure ground towards Denwick Bridge. A path winds upwards from the ride, presumably to the small rustic seat mentioned in the 1785 account, which as the account describes, would have had an excellent outlook back towards the castle and the river valley parkland and would indeed present a scene which at once charms and delights the spectator. [1785 manuscript 'Description of Alnwick Castle' by Peter Waddell].

Mackenzie confirms the effect of a walk through this part of the pleasure ground:

A neat Gothic gate, on the eastern side of the castle, leads to Barnside, where a spacious gravel walk winds along a fine high ground, which to the left commands a wide and beautiful prospect. The right side is decorated with shrubs and flowers, through which a path leads to the gardens belonging to the castle, in which the forcing-houses are disposed in the most modern and approved style, and contain a choice collection of exotic fruits and flowers. Passing the gardens, the walk is inclosed on each side with overhanging trees; but to the right the eye is suddenly presented with an opening of a semicircular form, in which

are two fish ponds and beautiful bowers. Leaving this sweet recess, the walk passes through a pleasing grove of oaks, then turns to the left and leads to the margin of the Aln, on the opposite side of which is a neat corn mill, with castellated walls and in the Gothic style; and a little below is an elegant stone bridge with one light circular arch. [Mackenzie E. View of the County of Northumberland 2nd edition, vol.1, 1825]

The mid nineteenth century sees some significant changes to the arrangement of the pleasure ground and parkland to the east of the castle with the addition (or at least mapping, given the earlier description, above) of rides crossing the parkland; some alteration of the boundary between pleasure ground and parkland and the removal of the ponds in the valley and re-alignment of the ride through the valley floor to the Denwick Lane gate.

The First Edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map shows the rides in the pleasure ground and further rides across the parkland to the east of the castle which were laid out to provide a variety of views as the visitor moved around the designed landscape. One of the eastward rides is contained in the pleasure ground and leads towards the walled garden, providing shelter when required and no doubt a more intense scheme of planting along the way. The northern ride enters the parkland above "Barney Side" and runs eastwards along the contour, giving extensive views of the river valley and the parkland beyond. Where it starts to turn southwards, into the valley proposed for the current development, a branch leads off to the north to pass below "Barney Side" in the direction of the Lion Bridge. As the eastwards ride continues into the valley another branch leaves northwards to follow the contour along the eastern valley side below "Leek's Hill" before turning westwards to pass along the riverside close to the cascade and on to the Lion Bridge underpass. Within the valley the ride continues southwards into the pleasure ground and on to the gate on the Denwick road. Before it reaches the gate the ride within the pleasure ground leaves running north eastwards to circuit the higher ground to the east of Leek's Hill as before. The Second Edition of the O.S. plan shows the boundary of the pleasure ground extended northwards to absorb the northern ride and some simplification of the drives (or at least their mapping) in the parkland to the south of the river. The subsequent edition, published 1923, shows additional planting in the valley advancing out to the revised boundary between pleasure ground and parkland.

Planning matters (continued...)

that scope does not seem unreasonable. To remove the restriction across the whole development is disproportionate. Meanwhile an outline application has been submitted for construction of detached houses on adjoining land (north-east of Stoney Hills). This proposes a general layout for 19 self-build plots, accessed through the neighbouring development on the Golf-Club. We have objected on the grounds that this is a greenfield site, beyond the existing developed area of the town and is not identified for development in the ADNP. There is no evidence that additional residential development is needed at the present time and it would be bad planning to approve the development whilst housing requirements are being reviewed as part of work on the Northumberland Local Plan. The site is not well placed in relation to shops or bus services. It is a long and steep walk from any shop or other local facility. The approach and access road are narrow, steep

and tortuous. This is not acceptable as sustainable access. The loss of the open field would be detrimental to the pleasant landscape setting of this quiet area of the town and would have an adverse effect on the character of an important and much valued walking route for local residents.

We commented on both the principle and the detail of the Windy Edge development in February. Subsequent changes to the proposals have introduced curves and bends in the road, but do not satisfy our point and we have not altered our position. The detail would be for the developers and others to agree but we have suggested some improvements, and it is an important principle that the road should not be to a significantly higher standard than the T junction on to the Alnmouth Road or on to Denwick Lane, if that were to become a permanent access to the overall development.

News in Brief

Who cares what happens in Islington?
Lots of people should.

In 2013 a developer bought a plot of land in Islington from The Ministry of Defence, then applied to build 96 homes.

Islington council requires a significant proportion of affordable housing, because there's a shortage in Islington. The developer tried to use a viability assessment to justify providing less affordable housing than required. They argued that they could not afford to provide more because of the price they had paid for the land. Two public inquiries and an independent planning inspector upheld the council's decision to refuse planning permission. The developer mounted a challenge at the High Court, which Mr Justice Holgate dismissed. Islington Council said: "This decision reinforces Islington Council's long-standing position that developers should abide by the council's planning guidelines – rather than overpaying for land and then trying to bypass our affordable housing requirements." In a postscript to the judgement Justice Holgate recommended that guidance on viability assessments by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors should be revised "in order to address any misunderstandings about market valuation concepts and techniques, the 'circularity' issue and any other problems encountered in practice over the last six years, so as to help avoid protracted disputes of the kind we have seen in the present case and achieve more efficient decision-making."

It has been described as a "landmark decision" and we hope that planners, planning committee members, developers, and everyone with an interest in affordable housing take note.

Four options have been drawn up to make Narrowgate more friendly to shoppers and other pedestrians. The County Council has budgeted for a feasibility study which is expected this year. The main area of focus is on the narrow section between the junctions with Fenkle Street and Bondgate Within. The four options are:

- Close this part of Narrowgate to traffic
- Give pedestrians priority: allow vehicles, but discourage them
- A one-way system
- No change



Done properly, we believe this would increase footfall for traders, as well as creating a better environment for pedestrians, and improved mobility for all. It is long overdue.

A County-wide consultation is under way on Public Rights of Way. In Alnwick the changes generally involve changes of status from Footpath to Bridleway, in order to join up discontinuous bridleway routes. These are essentially an exercise in tidying-up the regulations to match reality on the ground. As such they are to be welcomed, but there will be greater practical impact if the bridleway from along the old Wagonway from St James roundabout towards the High School can be connected by a crossing on Weavers Way, and joined properly at the other end to the shared footpath / cycleway approaching the High School. These points have been forwarded to NCC by the Town Council.



Community Speed Watch aims to make motorists aware that the community will not tolerate speeding.



It is about taking positive action, with local people working together to improve the safety and quality of life for everyone in the area. Volunteers set up the watch in a designated spot, using measuring equipment to record the speed of passing vehicles. Details are noted of any vehicles found to be speeding. Working with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team, a letter is then sent to motorists about their speeding. If the same driver is identified as speeding in the area a number of times then officers will make contact with the driver and action may be taken. We understand that there is some interest in exploring the possibility of such a scheme in Alnwick. If anyone is interested then let us know and we will pass on your details. There is more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8cdx4ge>



A new Alnwick Forum has been set up to ensure, through "consultation, consideration and dialogue" that the County Council's buildings and land in and around Alnwick contribute to the long term benefit of the town and its expanding community, as well as meeting the County Council's wider objectives. The forum is similar to one set up in Morpeth, and is a partnership between Northumberland County Council, Alnwick Town Council and other key stakeholders.

The Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has published a guide on Bringing Your Dog to the Coast. Key points are that none of the beaches in the AONB have dog bans with the exception of a seasonal restriction for breeding shorebirds in the middle of Beadnell Bay during the summer months; and within the Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve dogs must be kept on a short lead or at heel at all times. Outside the AONB, there are restrictions at Blyth and Newbiggin. The AONB welcome responsible dog-owners, and provide some simple guidance in a leaflet which you can download.

<https://tinyurl.com/ya78jwf8>

And finally, congratulations to all who were chosen for a Mayor's Civic Award in recognition of their efforts on behalf of the town. Not least the SAHH writing team. The awards were announced as this newsletter was finalised.

Quiz: Pointless signs

Regular readers will know that we periodically like to celebrate Alnwick's fine collection of historic street clutter.

This time we have collected a special display of pointless road signs. Some appear to have been made from invisible material. Some face the wrong way. Some can't be read from a moving vehicle. Some simply mislead. Perhaps some were intended to confuse an invading army.

We doubt if members have been misled, but we wonder how many can rely on local knowledge to find their way to these pointless locations: before turning to check their answers on the back page.



Diary dates

Civic Society...

The Society will be offering guided walks round Alnwick's historic town centre on Northumberland Day (27th May). See our web site for details of the walks, and <https://northumberlandday.co.uk> for other activities.

June 9th: Summer outing to Lilburn Tower. Contact a member of the committee if you would like to participate.

...and more

Bailiffgate Museum: "Batteries Not Included" - an exhibition of toys and pastimes through the years. Continues to 3rd Sept. Includes "Trains and Boats and Planes" on 2nd June and "Make your Own Toys" on 16th June.

Red Cross Open Gardens:

- 10th June: Lilburn Tower: large formal gardens, a walled garden and a large glasshouse, lawns and conservatory. There is also a woodland walk with pond garden.
- 1st July: Fallodon Hall: formal gardens in traditional grounds; lake woodlands, with specimen trees and a kitchen garden.
- 21st July: Chillingham Castle: a rare survival from 1828, the work of Royal garden designer, Sir Jeffrey Wyattville; famous herbaceous border (longest in Northern England). One wall, fifteen feet thick, was a jousting 'grandstand', and once extended around the castle grounds.

Cragside: from 23rd June to celebrate International Women in Engineering Day, "Switched on! Shining a light on female innovation". A new exhibition in partnership with Newcastle University.

Lilburn Tower

The ancient manors of East and West Lilburn were united when both were purchased by John Clennell about 1700. Eventually the estate passed to Henry John William Collingwood, and in 1828 he began the construction of an imposing new Elizabethan style mansion designed by John Dobson. The house, to be known as Lilburn Tower, was finished in 1842 at a cost of some £25,000. Collingwood designed the park and gardens.

Lilburn Tower is in private ownership and normally closed to the public, however the gardens and grounds are opened to the public once a year. Our thanks to Mr & Mrs Davison for allowing this visit.



About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in the 1970s, 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)

Treasurer and Membership: Gill Parker

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith

Other Executive Committee members:

John Hipwell

Mary McIlroy Hipwell

Elizabeth Jones

David Lovie (davidlovie307@btinternet.com)

Peter Reed / Newsletter (peter.reed@aligre.co.uk)

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

Quiz Answers

- A) Hospital sign on Denwick Lane: presumably to warn about the rear entrance, which is now closed by a locked gate.
- B) Hospital sign on South Road: pointing the wrong way.
- C) Empty signpost on South Road, opposite Infirmary entrance
- D) Empty signpost on Lisburn Street
- E) Directions to the Playhouse on Clayport Bank: Parallel to the road
- F) Junction sign on Prudhoe Street, facing the wrong way
- G) Junction sign on South Road, facing the wrong way