

# CURRENT ISSUES – UPDATED – August 2018

## HOT NEWS

Kings House, 9 The High Street

The planning application for a new house between the Kings Arms and St Laurence's Church has been refused by Wiltshire Council. See details below.

## PLANNING

At the end of 2017, there was overwhelming opposition, from the Parish Council, Downton Society and residents, to a planning application for a new two storey dwelling in the rear garden of the Grade 2 listed Kings House (previously Kings Arms). A revised application -submitted in June - proposed a single storey structure with a sloping 'green roof.' This was considered to be at odds with its historic setting and totally inappropriate for the middle of the Downton Conservation area. If built, it would have effectively ruined the character of the area around St Laurence's Church and the view from the High Street. We strongly opposed the plans and asked our members and all interested parties to do likewise.

Attached is a copy of the Downton Society letter to Wiltshire Council and the Parish Council.. For those familiar with the WC planning website, the Application Number is: 18/05345/FUL

It was our view that, if approved, this application would have irreparably damaged our Conservation Area, and the planning principles underlying it . So, it was very pleasing that there was significant support for our position with strong letters of opposition from local residents, the Church, Salisbury Civic Society, Historic England, the Conservation Officer and the Parish Council. As a result, the application was turned down.

As a Society, we express views in behalf of our members; but we would like to stress the importance of individual and community engagement - the views of other groups and personal letters, written in support or opposition to a proposal that affects our village, really do count.

## OTHER ISSUES

### The Society Award

The judging panel met and unanimously decided that 81 The Borough fully deserved this year's award. The owners had made a great effort to ensure that their extension was in keeping and added to the streetscape. Their architect had reflected local character in both design and use of materials and the work was skilfully executed by their builder.

In setting up the Award, the Society wanted to create a positive initiative as opposed to the constant negativity we feel surrounds development in Downton. As a society, we oppose plans that will adversely affect the Conservation area, but we also want to support development that we feel is appropriate. A build does not have to be a copy of what already exists, but it does need to add , not detract from the village experience .

We hope that next year , there will be more applicants for this Award.

Submissions can be from any part of the Parish and range from a minor replacement such as windows to a significant building project. For more details, see the Award section of this website.

### Traffic

Traffic flow and parking in Downton remains problematic and although a Parish Council working group, in which society members were involved, found that there were few ways of improving the availability of parking in the village, we address this issue whenever a planning application is made for new development We are particularly keen to identify suitable parking to meet the needs of the newly enlarged Memorial Hall which will be completed in September this year.

The HGV weight limit of 7.5 tons continues to be flouted. The problem is largely down to poor signage and attempts to address this at various levels (including Area Board and County council) have failed. We feel strongly that, unless there is clear signage at major access points (especially from the M27) lorry drivers will be tempted to use the B3080 through the village as a short cut. A new sign at the Cadnam roundabout doesn't help – it highlights width restrictions at Landford but makes no mention of restrictions through Downton. We continue to pursue this issue.

## Footpaths

The Downton Society Footpath Group has walked parish paths and beyond for over 10 years. As well as organising a regular programme of walks, the Group has worked in partnership with the Parish Council Amenities committee to obtain grants and improve paths in the Southern Wiltshire area. A marked and improved circular path with newly installed kissing gates (via Charlton Mill) is now complete, and will be formally “launched” before the autumn.

## Proposed bridge

You may be aware of proposals to link the southern area of the village (Moot Lane) with The Borough by a footpath and bridge. We understand that Longford Estates, the owner of fields which the path will cross, has given approval in principle. The Downton Society supports the idea of the footpath and bridge subject to more detail and consultation; but at present funding, even for initial surveys, is proving problematic.

## The Memorial Hall

Works to increase the size of the Memorial Hall to provide two meeting rooms and accommodation for the Pre-School have suffered from delays, but should be completed by the end of September this year. Developer contributions do not cover the full cost of the extension, but residents who voted in a consultation in 2017, overwhelmingly supported the extension and the increase in council tax which will fund a public works loan taken out by the Parish Council for this project.

## WILTSHIRE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATIONS

Wiltshire Council is engaged in a long review process to create a new Wiltshire Local Plan, which will guide the overall scale and pattern of development in the county up to 2036. The new plan will replace the current Wiltshire Core Strategy. Development decisions will be made on the basis of evidence gathered on local economic issues, infrastructure and housing need, as well as ongoing consultation, but the Plan will also be subject to new Government planning guidance (to be issued this summer in the revised National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF).

At an initial briefing, which we attended in Salisbury in early December 2017, it was shown that WC did not envisage additional housing for Downton. However, Wiltshire Council now say that no decisions have yet been made on

locations for future growth and development, as they will have to be reviewed in the light of NPPF and new Planning Practice Guidance. We will continue to monitor this, particularly in the context of the Downton Neighbourhood Plan, as it has become clear that NP's will have to be reviewed every three years or so to ensure that they remain in line with government and local authority policy.