

CURRENT ISSUES –NOVEMBER 2019

Planning and Conservation

It is a quiet time for planning at the moment, but an interesting application has been submitted for a small cottage No 18 Lode Hill. It is Grade II listed and is important as a good example of a small (very small) labourer's cottage. The application involves the removal of an existing poorly built extension and the replacement with a new modest build.

The Downton Society has written in support and this well illustrates our view on conservation alterations and extensions. We feel that the best way to preserve important historic buildings is that they continue to perform a useful function, in this case as a home. Sensitive, quality improvements can enhance the property and need not detract from its surroundings.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) & Parking

An HGV weight limit of 7.5 tons was introduced through Downton in 2007, but is routinely flouted. HGV's cause noise, pollution and inconvenience to people living along Lode Hill, the High Street and the Borough; vehicles have also been damaged. We feel strongly that, without clear signage at major access points (especially from the M27) lorry drivers will always be tempted to use the B3080 through the village as a short cut

Attempts to address this at various levels (Area Board, County councils, NFPA, Highways, the Police and our MP) have failed. So, after a decade of lobbying, the Society has handed the issue to the Parish Council. As PC resources appear to be limited they are not prioritising it, but, at the suggestion of our District Councillor, it has been agreed that an official Lorry Watch scheme should be set up. This will involve local residents marking the number of HGV's transiting the village. We understand that evidence of illegal transit is needed but, past experience suggests there will be problems of data collection and analysis. (For further details on the HGV issue, see under tab marked "Traffic/HGV" on this website)

Parking in Downton remains problematic , and although a Parish Council working group, in which DS members were involved, found that there were few ways of improving the availability of parking in the village, as a Society we will address this issue whenever a planning application is made for new development.

Downton in Bloom 2020

We have an attractive village but, following a community consultation at the Memorial Hall in June, our members and other residents in the village provided the impetus for us to register for the Royal Horticultural Society 's (RHS) In Bloom competition for 2020. We feel this will help to make our village look even better.

A small DS group has been co-ordinating practicalities, developing ideas and sourcing funds. We are delighted to have obtained full support from the Parish Council.; and The Horticultural Society, Green Group, Moot and Millenium Green, schools and some businesses are also engaged

RHS judges will come to the village in June/July 2020 to assess our horticultural achievement , environmental awareness and community engagement. In th meantime, there is much to do – and in the New Year, we plan to engage more people on projects to improve the village , including weed and litter picks, planting and floral displays - which we hope will be satisfying and enjoyable for all involved (Please check our In Bloom tab on this site for updates and more information)

Footpaths

Despite rain, winds and the rugby final, the improved Downton Circular Path was formally opened on Saturday 2 Nov . 25 people attended the cutting of the ribbon by Martin Wright, and with the weather temporarily improving, five hardy souls opted to 'walk the (very muddy) walk'. Directions and a route map for the Circular Path can be found in the Borough Café and village pubs. The Footpath Group still has the Mince Pie Walk on the 21st December, open to all. Details will be posted by email and on our website nearer the time

A proposal to link the southern area of the village (Moot Lane) with The Borough by a new footpath and bridge was endorsed by the community during the Neighbourhood planning process. Funding received by the PC as part of developers contributions (in respect of new housing on the A308) has covered a viability study with options for design, access and positioning. . The Downton Society supports the general concept - subject to more detail and community consultation.

Moviola

Moviola films for 2019 ended with a showing of Balloon – a German film about escape across the Berlin Wall. Tables were set out and beer and bratwurst in rolls were on offer - a change which people seemed to enjoy. Thanks to all our helpers, we are able keep this great tradition of village cinema going for another year. The 2020 season will start on the 18th January, and 15th February, 21st March and the 18th April are other dates for your diaries. For further details see the Moviola tab on this website

SALISBURY and WILTSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS

In response to the initial Salisbury Maltings consultation , the Downton Society agreed generally with the line taken by Salisbury Civic Society and expressed certain concerns (see under letters on this website) .The architects' revised planning application for phase 1 of the Maltings project (for a library, gym and hotel), which addressed some of the issues, was finally approved by the Strategic Planning Committee in September . We continue to take an interest in the plans for Salisbury, insofar as they affect conservation and the interests of residents in our parish

Wiltshire Council , meanwhile, is engaged in a process to create a new Wiltshire-wide 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, **At present, WC does not envisage additional housing for Downton.** However, locations for future growth and development will have to be reviewed in the light of any new government planning guidance as well as the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework. We will continue to monitor this, particularly in the context of the Downton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as it has become clear that NP's will have to be reviewed every few years to ensure that they remain in line with government and local authority policy.

