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# CHESTERFIELD & DISTRICT CIVIC SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

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No 8

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## NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We were delighted to welcome two new committee members to their first meeting this month. Diana Allen joins us as a representative of the North East Derbyshire Industrial Archaeology Society, which is affiliated to the Civic Society. Diana replaces David Palmer, who has been a great help on the committee for the last few years. The other new committee member (although he believes he was virtually a founder member of the Civic Society itself) is Darrell Clark of Walton, where he looks after the community noticeboards and tries to keep the place free of fly-posted notices. Darrel has also long been a mainstay of the Eyre Chapel in Newbold, with whose restoration the Civic Society was involved some years ago.

## BLUE PLAQUE PROGRESS AND PLANS

We are also pleased to say that, after an unfortunate case of an email going astray, plans for the plaque on the Central Methodist Church on Saltergate are now back on track and a design has been received from our supplier, Leander Architectural of Doveholes near Buxton. As soon as the Methodist Church has obtained listed building consent for the work, we should be able to go ahead.

We remain keen to pursue the idea of erecting a plaque at Boythorpe,

probably on the parade of shops at the heart of the estate, to mark the centenary next year of Chesterfield's first large social housing scheme. The first stage is to devise a suitable form of words and then to secure permission from the Borough Council as landlords to install a plaque.

Another possibility we discussed at our last committee meeting was a plaque on the newly refurbished former chapel on Chatsworth Road, which has a rear frontage to Wheatbridge Road. This was originally built by the Primitive Methodists. After it was superseded by Mount Zion, the large red-brick chapel a short distance to the west, the old chapel became the Coliseum cinema, and when that closed the building was used as a garage for some years. It has now been carefully renovated, with a café on the Chatsworth Road frontage and commercial premises behind. We felt that a plaque recording its varied history would be a nice finishing touch.

On a slightly different note, we learnt at the meeting that a plaque (not one erected by the Civic Society) has been taken down and not reinstated during improvement works at Barrow Hill. We hope to follow this up with the Borough Council.

## NEW CHURCH HALL FOR ST JOHN'S, NEWBOLD

The only planning application on which we have been consulted in the last month is one for a new hall to the rear of St John's church in Newbold. The existing building

is unremarkable and its proposed replacement is both bigger and better designed. The building, the work of Peter Rogan and Associates of Nottingham, will not affect the group of listed buildings on St John's Road (the church, designed by William Flockton of Sheffield, Rectory and former Church school, later the Eagle youth club) and we are happy to support the application. If any members would like to study the plans, they can be found via the Borough Council's planning website under the reference CHE/19/00551/FUL.

## NEW ACCESS TO THE RAILWAY STATION

Although we have not been consulted on the application, it may be worth mentioning (for members who do not read the official notices pages of the *Derbyshire Times* with the care they deserve) that the county council have applied for permission to build a new access road from the foot of Hollis Lane to the station, entering through the present car-park. This has been under discussion for some time. It will involve moving the builder's merchant which currently occupies part of the route but will not entail the demolition of either the Bridge Inn on Hollis Lane or, rather more crucially, the small grey stone building at the entrance to the station yard now called North Midland House, which is a grade II listed building. For many years wrongly believed to be the only surviving remnant of the original Chesterfield station of 1840, it has recently been shown to date from

c. 1870, when the station was rebuilt for the first time. It does, however, appear to incorporate masonry from Francis Thompson's station.

The new road is part of a wider project to improve the approach to the station but in the meantime this limited scheme should ease traffic congestion on the approach from Brewery Street and Felkin Street, and also take some traffic away from Crow Lane and Piccadilly Road, neither of which was designed to be part of a through route.

## REDEVELOPING THE OLD LIDL SITE

Lidl's new store elsewhere on Chatsworth Road is now up and running, but nothing has been done to redevelop the their old premises on part of the former gas-works site near the West Bars roundabout. We discussed this at the committee meeting and felt that the most appropriate use would be for housing, so as to provide some more, probably modestly priced, houses

within walking distance of the town centre. The last of the gas-holders could usefully be removed at the same time.

Until anything does happen, we also wondered whether the store car-park, which is currently blocked off, could not be used on a temporary basis as a pay-and-display car-park, thus perhaps easing pressure on on-street parking places on Chatsworth Road.

We still hope to pursue with Mecca the need to repaint the cut-out metal artwork at the entrance to the Holme Valley footpath, which the company has accepted is their responsibility to maintain.

## FLY POSTING AND LITTER

Not unreasonably, as someone who has campaigned almost single-handed against this particular problem for some years, Darrell Clark raised with the committee whether the Civic Society could do anything about

the widespread practice of leaving posters attached to lamp-posts and elsewhere long after the event they are advertising has taken place. It would also be true to say that local authorities tend to be better at posting official notices in the same way than taking them down.

The Borough Council are sympathetic to the problem but lack the resources to do much about it. Darrell has himself assembled an impressive collection of removed flyposted notices (which might make an eye-catching exhibit for the Civic Society stall at next May's family history fair at the Proact) but cannot tackle the whole borough single-handed.

Some other civic societies (with, it might be said, a larger and younger membership) organise litter picks in their area but the Chesterfield society has not done anything of this sort for many years (if ever). In the meantime, could we encourage individual members who walk past notices advertising events which have come and gone to take them down. It only needs a pair of scissors to make a contribution to improving the street picture in your town.