



Hartford Civic Society Newsletter

"Cherish the Past - Protect the Future"

Hartford Civic Society is a registered charity in England and Wales No 1099390 and is registered with The Civic Trust

Hartford Village Design Statement Adopted by Vale Royal Borough Council

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February 2005

On January 27th, at a meeting of the full Vale Royal Borough Council, the Hartford Village Design Statement (VDS) was formally accepted by the members and will now be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

The culmination of over a years work by village residents, under the leadership of the Civic Society, and in particular Keith Sexton, this important document sets out the way in which development should take place within Hartford.

It is a sister document to the Parish Plan that was recently published after a similar community effort led by the Parish Council. These two documents provide a statement of what is important for the people who live within the village. Whilst this VDS deals primarily with planning issues the Parish Plan covers the wider societal issues.

Together, they provide a blueprint for the future of our village through the eyes of the people who actually live here. The VDS is particularly signifi-

cant because it is the only way a community can have a direct influence on development at the planning proposal stage and must be taken into account by developers and the Council when considering applications.

It is not about whether or not a development should take place; that is the job for the Local Plan. It is not meant to, and will not stop development and change from happening. It will however help influence how any new development fits into the village, respecting the qualities and characteristics that village residents have indicated that they value.

Many people contributed to the Hartford VDS by either working on the document itself or participating at the open meetings, and we are delighted that it has been brought to fruition. The document will now be finalised for publication, with some photography, artwork and typesetting remaining to be completed. The VDS will be made as widely available as possible within the financial constraints on printing costs.

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Fight to Save Sandiway Cottage and Grounds

This is the beautiful half-timbered house on the left of Chester Road as you enter the village from the Winsford direction. It is noted for the glorious display of spring flowers amongst the trees that surround the property. It is thought to date from before 1830 and is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the village, adding a tremendous amount of character to the area.

October 2003 - The original application was submitted by Morris Developments Ltd to demolish Sandiway Cottage and to erect two blocks of sixteen flats and sixteen detached houses. It is notable that the plan included an access to the fields at the back of the property for "possible future access" - this land is currently Green Belt and not allocated for housing use but indicates the developer's hope that this could be changed in the future, leading to yet another major development in Hartford.

November 2003 - A revised proposed development still included demolition of Sandiway Cottage but replaced the two blocks of flats and sixteen houses with a larger number of houses.

February 2004 - The Council considered the proposal which was opposed by the Parish Council and the Civic Society. The recommendation from the VRBC Planning Department was for rejection. The Council Planning Committee's unanimous decision was "Full application refusal"

April 2004 - Morris Developments Ltd appealed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions against the refusal by VRBC to grant planning permission.

January 2005 - The Inquiry was held on the 19th January at Winsford. The enquiry was extended to a second day, held at the Northwich Memorial Hall with an accompanied visit to site by the Inspector on the 21st January.

The developers, on the first day of the inquiry, offered a unilateral agreement to retain the frontage of Sandiway Cottage and to preserve a number of the mature trees on the site. At this point it is not clear how cast iron this agreement would be but it would still result in the loss of 45 trees from the site.

They are now proposing to build approximately 37 houses and apartments within the grounds of the main house; 30% of which would be affordable housing. The Cottage would be renovated and extended to create a block of ten two-bedroom apartments, with the front aspect retained. There would also be a block of twelve "affordable" two bedroom apartments, a block of five mews properties and ten individual four-bedroom houses. As this is an application for permission in principle, the details of the actual properties (should the inquiry uphold the appeal) could of course change before a detailed plan is presented to the Council.

The Civic Society and the Parish Council, together with local residents and Councillor Keith Musgrave spoke against the proposal at the public inquiry. It is our understanding that Mike Hall MP has written to the Inspectorate to express his opposition.

The Inspector has indicated that she expects to issue her decision in the week commencing 28th February.



Village Lottery

The Society is considering restarting the Village Lottery if there are sufficient people who are interested in taking part. A draw would be held monthly with 60% of the funds distrib-

uted as prizes and 40% going to Society funds. The cost of participation would be £1 per month payable annually in advance. If you would like to take part, support the Soci-

ety and perhaps get a pleasant surprise one month please complete the slip on the attached form and return it. We will then contact you when the lottery starts.

Hartford Civic Society Launches New Website

The Society has been looking at ways to stay in touch with members and allow easy access to information on the village and the Society's activities. As part of this exercise the Society established a new website in the last part of 2004 and this is now fully up and running.

It is estimated that over 50% of the population have access to the internet, either at home or at work, and we hope that we can increase our level of contact, expand the information we are able to provide and cut down on the

use of paper by sending newsletters by email or putting them on the website — obviously we will continue to produce paper copies for our members who do not have internet access or who prefer to receive paper newsletters.

The site gives full details about the Society, the constitution, membership, our activities, planning issues within the village and a growing section on the history of Hartford.

Please visit the website—the address is www.hartfordcivicsociety.org.uk and let us know what you think about it, and what you would like included. Contributions from members would also be most welcome. You can email us on mail@hartfordcivicsociety.org.uk

You may also have noticed that the Society has adopted a new logo and a motto of "Cherish the Past—Protect the Future" which we feel encapsulates our role.

Attracting Birds to Your Garden

Don't forget that on February 24th we are fortunate to have a presentation by Peter Schofield (ex Chairman of The Wildlife Trust UK) who will be talking about "Attracting Birds to Your Garden"

The talk will be held in the Village Hall at 7:30 pm and admission is free for members (non-members are welcome - admission £1).



"Attracting Birds to Your Garden"

A talk on Thursday 24th February
7:30 pm
Hartford Village Hall.

Activities 2005

The Society has been discussing its activities for 2005 and has developed the following list of things it would like to pursue. Most of our time in 2004 was taken up with the compilation of the Village Design Statement and there is still a lot of work to do to get it published and distributed.

How much else we achieve this year will depend on the time available from members who are willing to help. If you feel you would like to be involved in these, or any other, activities of benefit to the village please let us know. Your contribution will be much appreciated.

Our main focus will continue to be promoting good planning within the village and keeping residents aware of developments that affect them. In this regard we are currently busy fighting the Sandiway Cottage proposal and publicising Network Rail's plans to erect new

fencing along the Chester to Manchester railway line.

Proposed List of Activities for 2005

Complete the Hartford Village Design Statement final draft

Secure VRBC approval and get the VDS adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance

Publish the VDS

Set up a Society website

Research the history of Hartford and publish articles of local interest

Oppose the Sandiway Cottage development

Publicise Network Rail plans for new fencing

Restart the Village lottery

Survey of spring flowers on the verges at the village entrances—we will photograph the village approaches so that we know where to plant in the autumn

Planting of bulbs on verges identified in the spring survey

Best garden competition

Lectures & Talks

Guided walks on local history

Rose Fete exhibition on Hartford and its history.

Provide free web space for local clubs and societies (who don't have the time or money to set up a dedicated website of their own)





Membership Renewal

The Society's membership year runs from the 1st April each year and so renewal time is almost upon us.

The Society would prefer payment of subscriptions by Standing Order as this reduces the amount of work for us at renewal time. Standing Orders can be cancelled by you at any time if you decide not to remain a member. If you do not currently pay by this method please complete the attached form and return it to the Society and we will do the rest.

If you prefer to pay by cheque please make it payable to "Hartford Civic Society".

Seven pounds year is very little to protect the character and quality of the place you live in. Everybody has extremely busy lives these days and it is difficult to find time to be actively involved in everything, but your subscription is a valuable contribution. Without funds our work must be limited.

Could you recruit a new member to support our work?

Special offer - New Members joining before 1st April will receive membership until April 2006 in exchange for one year's subscription.

Gift Aid

If you are a member and haven't already done so please consider filling in and returning a Gift Aid declaration at the back of the newsletter.

Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give we get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further. This means that £10 can be turned into £12.80 just as long as donations are made through Gift Aid.

Imagine what a difference that could make,

and it doesn't cost you a thing. If you are a higher rate tax payer you can also claim tax relief on your donation.

So if you want your donation to go further, Gift Aid it. Just complete the form and send it back to us.

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year

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Statement of Purpose

What We Are

- We are a non profit making registered charity.
- We are totally independent of local government.
- We are a non political organisation.
- We are a watchdog for inappropriate development within the village.
- We care about our village and surroundings because we live here.
- Our activities are different but complementary to those of the Parish Council.
- We seek to work with local government to protect and improve our village.
- We seek to influence national government through membership of The Civic Trust.
- We seek to encourage the use and viability of local businesses.
- We want Hartford to remain a village and not be swallowed up by urban expansion.

What We Are Not

- We are not against all developments - change can be for the better.
- We are not a universal ombudsman.

Why You Should be a Member

- You care about what the village you live in will be like in 5 or 10 years time.
- You value the surrounding countryside and Hartford as a separate entity.
- You want to put something into the community you live in.
- You value our heritage and the character of the village.
- You would like a watchdog to alert you of possible development problems.
- You would like to feel that there is a structure in place to fight inappropriate development proposals.
- You would like to support improvements within the village.

The Society is a member of The Civic Trust which is the umbrella organisation for over 850 civic societies and influences national government policy on important issues.

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Using Gift Aid means that for every pound you give we get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donation to go further.

This means that £10 can be turned into £12.80 just as long as donations are made through Gift Aid. Imagine what a difference that could make, and it doesn't cost you a thing.

So if you want your donation to go further, Gift Aid it. Just complete this form and send it back to us.

First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Signature _____

I want all donations I've made since 6 April 2000 and all donations in the future to be Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise.

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income tax or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we will claim in the tax year

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Village Lottery If you would be interested in taking part in a Village Lottery please tick this box (and ensure we have your name and address if not included on one of the other forms you are returning)

Please return completed forms to:-

Hartford Civic Society
c/o 8 Sandiway Park
Hartford
Northwich
Cheshire
CW8 2AS

