



Hartford Civic Society Newsletter

"Cherish the Past - Protect the Future"

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Hartford Village Design Statement Final Document Published

We hope to have enclosed your own personal copy of the Hartford Village Design Statement with this newsletter. If not, it will follow shortly when we receive them from the printers.

As reported in the last newsletter Vale Royal Borough Council formally accepted the Hartford Village Design Statement (VDS) on January 27th 2005 and it is now officially Supplementary Planning Guidance.

It has taken us a little time to finalise the document and to sort out the necessary funding for printing—we are grateful to VRBC and Hartford Parish Council for the grants that have made this possible. Unlike the Parish Plan this document has not been distributed to every household in the village but copies will be made available to interested parties and Society members have been sent one per family. The document is also available for reading or downloading from the Society's website.

The production of the VDS is a major achievement by the village as it will have a material effect on future development. Together with the Village Plan it represents a view of what the residents of Hartford want for their community and attempts to influence decision making in order to achieve those desires.

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

Thanks are due to all those individuals who have contributed to its production by participating in the various meetings and workshops, as authors, proofreaders, photographers or one of the countless other roles. This has all been achieved by volunteers who give freely of their time in order to benefit the wider community.

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Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 6th October after the Northwich Mines presentation— see overleaf for details.

The agenda will consist of the Chairman's Report, the Treasurer's Report and the election of officers for the forthcoming year.

Could you contribute to the running of the Society?

We are looking for members who would like to help with the Society's running and decision making.

There are vacancies on the Executive Committee and we would love to hear from anybody who has an interest in contributing. For instance, we are looking for a new Secretary to take the minutes of the meetings (once per month) and deal with the small amount of correspondence that the Society receives.

If you would like to discuss possible roles or your greater involvement please feel free to give the Chairman (Colin) a call on 01606 888792.

The Committee is elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. Currently serving members are eligible for re-election. Nominations for election to the Executive Committee of the Society should be made in writing to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the AGM. (Nominations should be sent to Mr D Lomas, 1 The Grange, Hartford).

Nominations must be supported by a seconder and the consent of the nominee must first have been obtained (nominees and seconds must be current members of the Society). In the event of nominations exceeding the number of available positions a ballot will be held at the AGM

Annual General Meeting

Approximately 9:00 pm
Thursday 6th October
Hartford Village Hall





Northwich Salt Mines Stabilisation Project Background

Anybody who has bought a house in the Northwich area will be familiar with the legacy of the salt industry that requires searches for subsidence risk resulting from salt mining and brine extraction going back hundreds of years. The timber frame with brick infill design, characteristic of many Northwich buildings, is due to a need for them to withstand subsidence. They could be jacked up and then levelled if the ground dropped under them.

However, did you know that Northwich stands over two very large and two smaller salt mines, and that there was a high probability that they would collapse by the year 2020 leading to subsidence of up to three metres in large parts of the town?

The four 19th century mines – Barons Quay, Witton Bank, Pennys Lane and Neumanns – extracted salt from a layer 40 metres below ground level. The salt was mined by hand and 8 metre square pillars were left to support the roof. When the mines closed it was realised that water seepage into the mines could dissolve the pillars and so in 1920 the mines were flooded with brine. This has served, to some extent, to protect the pillars and to provide hydrostatic support. Modern understanding has established that 8 metre pillars were insufficient and the current working mine at Winsford has 25 metre pillars. The problem came to a head in 1988 when a developer drilled test boreholes before committing to a project in the town. He discovered that the salt pillars were being eroded and would eventually fail. Needless to say, he decided not to go ahead!

This led to a planning moratorium being imposed in 1994 and the start of a long process to find a solution and the necessary funding to implement it.

In 2002, after a change to an Act of Parliament (previous legislation only allowed funding for coal mines) the necessary finance became available from central government and a project commenced.

The plan is to fill the mines with a grout made from 97% Pulverised Fuel Ash (PFA), 2.5% concrete and 0.5% salt – the exact mix has been fine tuned to achieve maximum residual strength whilst at the same time minimising cost and allowing the grout to flow through pipes into the mines. The grout displaces the brine, which is recovered.

The PFA is brought by rail from the Drax power station to a purpose built mixing plant that has been constructed on the Brunner Mond site at Winnington. New railway sidings were laid in order to accommodate the trains. The recovered brine is pumped into a lagoon on the same site in order to allow any solids to settle out and then sent by train to British Salt at Middlewich for processing. In September the project began to make trial mixes in order to refine the mix quantities. During October the mineshafts were located, and work commenced to plug these to prevent the grout escaping. When the mines closed the shafts were filled, but there were no records of how this was done or of their exact location. December saw the start of pumping trials.

In order to connect the mixing plant and the mines five pipes have been laid – three steel ones to deliver the grout and two plastic to return the brine (these can be clearly seen running along the verges of Leicester Street). These five pipes run through a larger 2 foot diameter pipe from near the Victoria Hospital and under the Weaver; a distance of 500 metres. This pipe was installed using an underground directional drill to avoid having to disrupt the town with major excavations.

The stabilisation work started in January 2005 and will continue until October 2007 during which time approximately one million tonnes of grout will have been mixed and pumped. Pumping is planned to take place for 12 hours each day.

The Council carried out a full building survey before work commenced so that any changes could be properly assessed as the work continues. Once completed, monitoring will continue for 10 years. The cost of the project at today's prices is £32.5 million.

The Council sees a redevelopment of Northwich as a leisure location following on from the project - once developers feel they are on solid ground!

This plan is termed the 'Vision for Northwich' and currently extends over a fifteen year period with better use of the riverside being made together with 20,000 additional sq ft of retail space, 800 dwellings, a hotel and cultural centre, multi-storey car parks, new road infrastructure and even a new bridge over the river as an extension of Leicester Street. It is hoped to generate an additional 500 jobs in the town.

Although the work of this project does not physically affect Hartford the implications that it has for the future development of Northwich are obviously of interest. As our local town and primary shopping centre the implementation of the "Northwich Vision" will be of interest to all of us. Improved shopping and leisure/recreational facilities will be used by the whole of the surrounding area.

The Society thought, therefore, that this would be a good subject for one of our presentations and details of this can be found below.

Project Update Talk

David Billington, the VRBC Project Manager for the Salt Mines Stabilisation Project, has kindly agreed to give a talk about the progress that has been made on this unique undertaking since the start of the project in January 2005.

The talk will be held in the Village Hall at 7:30 pm.

Admission is free for members (non-members are welcome - admission £1).



“Northwich Salt Mines Stabilisation Project”

**A talk on Thursday 6th
October
7:30 pm
Hartford Village Hall.**



Village Lottery

The Society will be restarting the Village Lottery in October. Thank you to the many members who have agreed to take part.

Players will have been notified of their number (1 to 49) and the winner each month will be the player whose number matches the Bonus Ball drawn on the first Wednesday in the month in The National Lottery. There will be a prize of £24 to the lucky winner!

Using the National Lottery Draw makes administration of the lottery easier and ensures the draw is seen to be totally fair. However, this also means that we can only run the lottery in groups of 49 players. At present we are still short of players to complete our second group.

Would you like to play? If you would please ring Hilary on 01606 76400



Useful Contacts for Planning Matters

Some members have asked for a guide on what work they are permitted to do without having to apply for planning permission.

The Society has looked at providing this information but the legislation is so complex that we do not feel it would be wise to try and summarise it in the newsletter. There are several categories of minor development that generally do not require permission since the rights are enshrined within national rather than local rules. However these rights may not apply if, for instance, you live in a Conservation Area or in other circumstances where stricter rules may be in force.

Our advice, therefore, is to talk to the Planning Department at Vale Royal Borough Council.

They can be contacted by telephone on:- 01606 862862

or by post at :-
Planning and Building Control Services
Wyvern House
The Drummer
Winsford
Cheshire
CW7 1AH

or e-mail:-
planning@valeroyal.gov.uk.

The Council's website gives information on planning and you can make a planning application online at www.valeroyal.gov.uk.

There is also some very useful information available at www.onlineplanningoffices.co.uk

Please remember that if you carry out any work without planning permission and it subsequently turns out that it was required it could involve you in considerable expense and inconvenience—even perhaps in the demolition of the work that has been carried out.

When in doubt—ask.

Activities 2005

In the February Newsletter we set out a list of activities that the Society hoped to achieve in the following twelve months. This seems a good point to review the progress we have made on those items.

Activities for 2005

The Hartford Village Design Statement has been completed, adopted by Vale Royal Borough Council and published.

The Society's website has been set up and can be accessed at www.hartfordcivicsociety.org.uk

There are a number of articles on Hartford's history on the website and we are researching further additions.

The opposition to the Sandiway Cottage development is ongoing and we are pursuing a number of more general Planning issues with our MP—Mike Hall.

We have made residents aware of the Network Rail plans to erect fencing along the railway lines.

The Village lottery has restarted this October.

A survey of spring flowers on the verges at the village entrances has been completed so that we know where to plant new bulbs in the autumn. The Parish Council are arranging for bulbs to be made available from VRBC.

Two lectures have been arranged for October (see previous page) and Feb/Mar 2006.

We had a presence at the Rose Fete.

We are now able to 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).

The Society is purchasing and donating a projector screen to the Village Hall for the use of all local groups (not on our original list).

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 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.

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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