

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2008

www.swindoncivictrust.org.uk

**swindon
civic
trust**

Our summer newsletter is a little shorter than usual but what it lacks in quantity it makes up for in quality. There is so much debate about the future of Swindon at the moment and we are pleased to be involved in this.

On page 2 Donald Brunwin looks at the Central Area Action Plan and discusses some of the problems and issues. He highlights the route of the canal, traffic management and the Railway Village.

Jean Saunders keeps us up to date with news that Redrow Homes and Persimmon Homes have submitted a revised plan to build next to Coate Water.

It is great to see the progress on the new library building. This has been a priority since I came to Swindon in 1983 and we are almost there in 2008. The Civic Trust is arranging a visit to the new library on 27 November as part of its events programme.

I would like to congratulate the events sub-committee on a very active programme this year. Please have a look at page 3 for full details of future events. Sally Harper gives some background to her talk on Eco Development on 31 July at Heelis.

There is an event every month now so please try and come along. We have held a number of fascinating talks over the last year and all have been followed by lively debate. Please try and come along if you can.

**For a visual record of
Swindon see:**

www.SwindonGallery.org.uk

Objectives

- To promote environmentally sustainable, high quality standards in local planning and development in Swindon.
- To protect and improve special features of historic and public interest in Swindon
- To help local people to inform themselves about Swindon's geography, history, and communities, as well as the decision-making processes which affect the built environment
- To encourage participation by community groups, and by individual Swindon residents, in fulfilling these aims.

The Committee

We are always looking for people who want to help us fulfil our objectives so if you are interested in helping then please contact one of the committee.

Colin Henderson Donald Brunwin
Karen Leakey Martha Parry
Lisa Hawkes

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**Copies of this newsletter
are available in large
typeface.**

Swindon's Central Area Action Plan

Donald Brunwin

For the last 18 months the Planning sub-committee has been involved in responding to the Central Area Action Plan consultation. This Plan updates and replaces the corresponding policies and allocations in the Swindon Borough Local Plan (2011), and provides the development plan framework for Central Swindon to 2016. Several hundred interested parties have contributed to the consultation as it progressed through various stages. These included; "Issues and Options", "Preferred Options", and "Submission". The Plan is now at the stage where a government Inspector examines the plan and the results of the consultation process prior to preparing a report with precise recommendations that will be binding on the Council.

At the end of the month (June), the Inspector will conduct five all-day Hearing Sessions for discussion on the content or merits of the Action Plan. Of the several hundred who responded to the consultation process, only eight parties elected to attend the Hearing Sessions. The Swindon Civic Trust will be represented at four of the Sessions.

Generally speaking the Action Plan refines and improves upon existing Central Area Policies. The main areas of contention include; "the route of the Canal", the lack of a completed traffic management plan, the quantity of parking allowed and the protection and enhancement of the Railway Village Conservation Area. Much of the time is allocated to examining whether the proposed policies are sufficiently sound, and what further measures may be needed to be taken to ensure they are robust. (At the end of the process we can truly expect to have a most splendid town centre.)

The Inspector will then prepare the report with the recommendations that are to be incorporated into the final Action Plan that will then be adopted by the Council as implementable Planning Policy for the Central Area.

Core Strategy

Overriding all the other local planning consultations is the on-going Core Strategy consultation. This is intended to take in all the needs of the Borough. Regrettably the Trust's Planning sub-committee has grown smaller and smaller, and although we are aware of what is happening, we find it difficult to present a truly representative view. Because of this we have been hesitant to take part and our input has been slight. This concern has also affected our input into the Central Area Action Plan beyond issues that are widely recognised as controversial.

We would wish to widen the involvement of our members, but basically lack the resources and people to carry out this work. Our one attempt last year, at an event held at the "Community Crossroads", was not sustained because of these issues. As a Civic Trust we should have a greater say in the development of the Town and request that any members interested to initially contact me on donald@swindoncivictrust.org.uk

The Swindon Civic Trust's response to the Central Area Action Plan can be found on our website www.swindoncivictrust.org.uk.

Next Edition

The autumn edition of the newsletter will be issued in October/November and the deadline for submissions is 14 October 2008. You can e-mail these for the attention of Rob Brailsford at info@swindoncivictrust.org.uk We would be pleased to hear your comments on the Newsletter or from anyone who wishes to contribute to the debate over the future of Swindon.

"Eco development - ways to grow greener"

Sally Harper

MSc (Energy Efficient and Sustainable Building),

PgDip Journalism, DipCIM, Dip MRS

**Thursday, 31 July at 7.30 p.m
At Heelis (National Trust Central Office) in
Kemble Drive, Swindon**

Entry: £4 at the door, includes light refreshments, free to Swindon Civic Trust members.

"Eco development - ways to grow greener" is designed as an introductory talk to effective eco 'action' in existing homes and the potential benefits of sustainable buildings and infrastructure to a community.

Sally Harper will provide an understanding of effective energy efficient measures in existing homes and environmental design concepts within the sustainability agenda, such as adaptive, future-proofed, and 'liveability', for buildings and infrastructure. Her talk will also provide a brief overview of the planned 'levers' of change for a greater commitment to sustainable building.

Sally is a co-founder of The Seed-Group. The Seed-Group provides consultancy services to commercial organisations and private clients on low carbon and environment conscious design for buildings and people.

In March 2008, as part of the Centenary Ideal Home Show, the Group was commissioned by the World Wide Media Group to deliver a green focused visitor education package throughout this year's key exhibit - the Ideal Home Eco House.

The Group was asked to simplify the complicated messaging that surrounds Eco Houses. The Seed-Group delivered a communications package that left visitors to the Eco House with precise, simple and effective ways to reduce carbon emissions in their own homes.

In addition, Sally provides consultancy services on eco conscious design to some of the UK's leading Climate Change organisations engaged in educating the public including COIN, SEA, NEF and ECI.

As a follow-up to Sally's talk, on 14 August, a visit has been arranged to an eco home in Oxfordshire. The eco-home is an exemplar retrofit of a 18th century cottage. A 90% reduction in the carbon footprint of the home was achieved by using eco (reclaimed and organic) materials and new renewable energy technology. In opting for this combined approach the design addresses our concern about global pollution and natural resource depletion alongside our desire to create a healthy building from renewable resources. Selecting effective insulation, which was not harmful to the historic fabric or the environment has been central to the design challenge of this 'green' renovation.

Swindon Civic Trust – Events Programme

Date	Talk/Visit
Thursday, 31 July, 6.30 p.m. 7.30 p.m. Heelis	Tour of Heelis – limited space available. First come first served basis Sally Harper: Eco Development - Ways to Grow Greener
Thursday, 14 August – time tbc	Visit to an eco home in Oxfordshire which is an exemplar retrofit of a 18 th century cottage.
Monday, 1 September, 7.00 p.m. - AGM and talk, Heelis	Lyn Hill-Tout GWH Foundation Trust
October – date tbc	Kevin McCloud Sustainable Dwellings in Swindon
Thursday, 27 November, 7.30 p.m., New Central Library	Tour of the library, and presentation on the facilities available. There will also be a talk by the architect of the building.

NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

New Plans for Coate Development

Jean

Saunders,

SaveCoate

It is vital that you are made aware of the fact that Redrow Homes and Persimmon Homes are still proposing to build 1,800 new houses and a 7 storey office block on land between Coate Water, the motorway and the A419 trunk road. The loss of a university partner has not curbed their enthusiasm to spoil this treasured beauty spot. Everyone appears to assume that the fight to Save Coate is over and they are shocked when informed that this is not the case.

The house-builders have submitted revised plans for the site. It is quite difficult to spot the differences compared to those submitted by them in the August 2007 planning application. The land taken out of the proposals amounts to about a further 2-3 hectares - barely of any consequence on a 200ha building site. The main difference is that small parcels of land, previously identified for housing and of high archaeological importance, will be left as open space.

Formal comments (quoting planning applications references: SO7 1688 & SO7 1689) need to be sent to Ian Halsall at SBC, Regeneration & Planning, Premier House, Station Road, Swindon SN1 1TZ by 1st July or soon after.



Judicial Review of Condition 99

We have news in that CPRE and Geoff Yates, on 31 May 2008 issued proceedings in the High Court against Swindon Borough Council over their discharging of Condition 99 of the planning permission for the Front Garden. This concerns improvements to M4 Junction 16. Further information is on the website www.stophetunnel.com where it is possible to sign up broad support.

The Richard Jefferies House and Museum

The Museum is open on the first and third Sundays of the month until the end of September from 2-5pm and on the second Wednesday of the month from 10am to 4pm throughout the year.

Anyone who can help in the gardens will be more than welcome. Please contact Jean Saunders on 783040 or e-mail jeanadsaunders@tiscali.co.uk