



Beacon Street Area Residents' Association NEWS



Autumn 2013

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The Angel Croft Planning Application

Local residents have been concerned for some time about the deterioration of the Angel Croft Hotel, which has been empty since 2008. This building needs to be brought back into use. So it is good news that a planning application has been submitted which proposes to do this. BSARA will comment on the detail of the application once we have reviewed the paperwork and discussed the proposal with the developer and the District Council.



Figure 1 The Angel Croft

Webb Hotels and Travel Ltd own both the Angel Croft and George hotels. The owners, in partnership with Sammi Developments Ltd, now propose converting the Angel Croft to residential use. The planning application says the building will include nine apartments with sixteen parking spaces reserved for residents. A pay & display facility will continue on part of the site.

The Angel Croft Hotel is in a conservation zone and is Grade II* listed. In 2008 a planning application was submitted to refurbish the hotel, but was subsequently withdrawn. BSARA understood that the cost of addressing conservation matters had made it uneconomic to proceed.

BSARA is aware that there have been repeated break-ins with thieves making off with lead flashing and parts of the central heating system; which caused water damage. English Heritage have

placed the building its front railings and gates on its Buildings at Risk register with an "A" priority, stating that there is an *"immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric."*

BSARA hopes that, on this occasion, the conservation issues which scuppered the 2008 planning application can be overcome.

Campaigning for a 20 MPH Speed Limit

The narrow section of Beacon Street where the Angel Croft is located has been identified by BSARA speedwatch as a cause for concern regarding excessive speed. Lichfield Cathedral School, which has classrooms on both sides of Beacon Street, use the traffic light controlled Pelican Crossing regularly during the school day to access lessons.



Figure 2 Looking down Beacon Street towards the crossing

A recent accident at the traffic lights has highlighted these concerns. BSARA and the Cathedral School have approached Staffordshire County Council to seek a reduction in the speed limit between Swan Road and Gaia Lane to 20 mph with signage to warn drivers of school children crossing.

This section of our street also experiences problems due to coaches dropping off passengers on the road adjacent to The Close rather than using the coach bays alongside Beacon Park. To further strengthen the case BSARA has asked Staffordshire County Council to put traffic monitoring strips across Beacon Street to measure the speed and volumes of traffic over a period of time.

Outer Friary Development



Figure 3 Aerial view of Friary Outer July 2013

How good it is now to drive into Lichfield via the Bowling Green roundabout, and see lights on in many of the windows in the new development thus showing it is being lived in at long last. After many months of delays and disruption and what at times seemed slow progress, the building has come alive; the footpath is back in action and a new long stay car park is now open., charging £4:00 for all day. Through the entrance, the ground floor offers many disabled parking places as well as two “hook up” points for electric vehicles. There is a height restriction but most private vehicles should not have a problem. There are also new toilets so at the moment all seems positive.



Figure 4 Cars parked in Beaconsfield

BSARA is very concerned about the volume of cars using Beacon Street and its side roads for town parking. We have raised our concerns with

the County Council and we sincerely hope that the availability of new long stay parking in the Outer Friary car park will encourage drivers to use this facility and free up our streets. BSARA will continue to monitor this problem and report our continued concerns especially if there is no improvement.

It is also encouraging to see that work has started on the construction of a Premier Inn on the site. Let us hope work will keep to schedule and the entrance to our beautiful city will once more become welcoming to all who live here or visit us.

Boundary Commission rules on number of Councillors in Lichfield District

As you may have read in the Lichfield Mercury a consultation on the number of councillors needed has taken place. As part of this process, many individuals and organisations of which BSARA was one submitted their proposals for the structure of the council.

For full details of comments expressed by all interested parties, visit the web site: -

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/west-midlands/staffordshire/lichfield-fer>

Lichfield District Council is also undertaking a “Fit for the future” review to establish how services can be delivered on a reduced budget. BSARA maintains that council management and governance should be part of this wider review.

The Boundary Commission has now given the verdict on the submissions made to them. The recommended number of councillors is 47.

This is a positive step in the right direction as BSARA recommended a drop in the number of councillors from 56 to 40.

The Commission will now progress to stage two of the process determining ward boundaries which will be announced in 2014.

By-Election Chadsmead Ward

A by-election will now have to be called to elect a new councillor for the Chadsmead Ward after the disqualification of Mike Fryers for failing to attend meetings over a period of six months

Newcastle United FC Supporters Visit Beacon Street

Football fans often stop off in Lichfield for refreshments before going on to football matches across the West Midlands; these are normally peaceful events, until Saturday 14th September 2013 when NUFC fans created mayhem in Beacon Street. Local residents were uneasy about leaving their houses and litter and debris was scattered over the street. The police were called and eventually the fans were herded back onto their coaches leaving the locals to clean up the mess left behind.



Figure 4 NUFC fans marauding in Beacon Street

BSARA wrote to the Chairman of Newcastle Football Club with copies to Lichfield City Council and Lichfield Police expressing its dismay at what had happened and NUFC promptly replied expressing regret however they explained that it was the responsibility of the Coach Company to ensure this type of behaviour did not occur. The police did confirm that the coach firms should have informed them that they intended to stop in the City thus ensuring police officers were on call to prevent anti social behaviour. This appears not to have happened on this occasion!

The police have thoroughly investigated the circumstances and the coach company has been spoken to. No charges have been made on this matter at this stage through a lack of evidence to comply with the Section 1 of the Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985

Beacon Street Scene

Beacon Street is one of the main routes into and away from the city. It has many historical buildings and residents are proud to live on the street.

Using “wheelie bins” is now the way rubbish and recycling is dealt with. Consequently on “bin days” many bins are out on the pavements and they can become blocked. It is the responsibility of us all to be vigilant and retrieve our bins as quickly as possible after they have been emptied.

Unfortunately rubbish does occasionally escape from bins when emptying takes place, and that, along with dropped litter, detracts from the cleanliness of our street. So if we could all take on responsibility for removing the litter it would be of great benefit to us all.



Figure 5 Bins awaiting collection narrowing pavement after emptying
Now may be a good time to trim back hedges and overhanging branches from trees thus further removing obstructions on our pavements enabling pedestrians to have a clear passageway.

Garden hedges are the responsibility of the property owners to maintain and not the council, who are in their rights to insist that you get them cut.

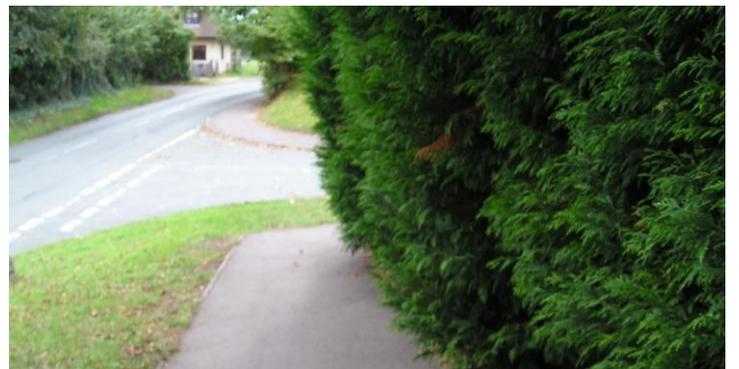


Figure 6 Hedges overhanging pavements

Beacon Street History

Following on from our article on Darwin House a local history feature will be included in this and future editions of the newsletter. BSARA thanks Kate Gomez for her contribution to the article below. Kate is the author of Lichfield Lore, <http://lichfieldlore.co.uk> an excellent local history blog. The history of Lichfield's pinfolds is covered in more detail on the BSARA website <http://www.beaconstreetara.org/local-history>.

The Pinfold

Many local residents will know of the pinfold that is at the junction of Beacon Street, Stafford Road, and not surprisingly, Pinfold Road! Pinfolds were used to impound straying animals, which would be released to their owner on payment of a fine. In the 1890s this was around 1s 4d per animal.



The Beacon Street pinfold was originally located near to where Anson Avenue meets Beacon St and was moved to its present position in 1809. According to the listed building description, the walls of the structure date to the eighteenth century but were raised in the nineteenth century. The gate, steps and paving are twentieth century additions as is the information plaque, added when the pinfold was restored in the 1990s, with money from the Conduit Lands Trust.

Other pinfolds existed in Lichfield and they stood at various entrances to the city, although their location did change over time. Apart from the pinfold in Beacon Street another stood at Greenhill, from the fifteenth century to the early nineteenth century, when it was moved to the junction of Broad Lane and Boley Lane.

In Lichfield, the maintenance and administration of the pinfolds were the responsibility of the pinners,

two officials elected at the annual St George's Court. One represented St Michael's parish and the other St Chad's.

Writing about Beacon Street in 1943, City Librarian and local historian, Mr J W Jackson recalled how *"the old pinfold still remains, but is rarely, if ever used for its original purpose though in our younger days it frequently contained horses, cattle or sheep which had been caught straying on the road and 'penned' by the official pinner old Watty Bevin"* Pinfolds may have fallen out of use by the midtwentieth century but the Pipe Green Trust, still have a pinner as a member of their Committee. Originally this person was responsible for ensuring that the boundary of Pipe Green was secure and that the animals could not stray from the Green. Today this is still one of the roles of the pinner, although picking litter up on the Green is probably more time consuming! Unsurprisingly, some owners would try to remove their animals from the pinfold illegally, to avoid paying the fine. According to Mr William Russell's account of the Manor of Lichfield, appearing in the Mercury on January 26th 1894, this offence of 'pound breach' was very common. He includes a bill of the charges claimed by one time pinner John Bancks for the repair of the 'pindfould' in Beacon St after one occurrence. Mr Bancks charged 1s 4d for his own two days work whilst masons received 2s for the two days. The pound was also fitted with '2 staples for the gate and a clip and a lock, and other ironwork about the gate' at a cost of 1s 8d. Mr Bancks noted that, "This time I cannot prove who broke it. It is supposed they were 'souldiers' who took lock and staples away, and let out a cow of Nevills". Unfortunately, no date is included.



Local Plan and Infrastructure update

Since the last newsletter the Local Plan Inquiry has taken place with Inspector Robert Yuille presiding and issuing an interim report to Lichfield District Council during September 2013. BSARA was present for most of the hearings and was invited to make representation at a number of them. The onerous task of the BSARA representation fell on Andre Hefer's shoulders, who had conducted so much valuable research into the Lichfield Local Plan. The inspector indicated that a further 900 properties would be needed by 2028, on top of the 8,700 included in the local authority's Local Plan with the council being given six months to identify possible locations for these homes. The Local Plan has already suggested 450 houses in South Lichfield and a further 750 at Streethay.



The desire amongst developers trying to get a share of the additional homes has begun with various sites throughout the district being put forward including one on Darwin Park for 150 houses. BSARA accepts that houses have to be built but is committed to ensuring that infrastructure is created that minimises the effect that the additional houses have on existing facilities.

BSARA had a meeting recently with our two County Councillors, Terry Finn and Caroline Wood, to discuss infrastructure relating to highways, additional schools and medical facilities. The developers do have to make financial contributions but for the larger infrastructure projects, such as the Southern by-pass, major road junction improvements and additional schools etc. further funding is required from other sources.

The new homes bonus that councils are now able to claim does give them the opportunity to bolster the coffers, for Lichfield District Council it could be

“Pennies from heaven” with the current financial reserves in a precarious position.

BSARA is very concerned that Staffordshire County Council will take the soft infrastructure options to enable LDC to get the houses built but put the decisions that should be made and implemented now off to a later date.

BSARA AGM

The BSARA AGM will be held at the Cathedral Lodge Hotel, Beacon Street **on Wednesday 19th March 2014 at 19:30** Please make a note in your diary as we would like to see as many people there as possible.

We will invite the ward councillors from our three Councils: - County, District and City, to the meeting to enable members and the general public to make comment on any aspect of the operation of Council Affairs.

BSARA feels that our councillors need to be extremely proactive in their work and ensure that the concerns of their electors are effectively represented at all levels and across the ward boundaries.

BSARA Membership

Renewal Subscriptions will be due on the 1st January 2014 we hope that current members and residents of the area will continue to support us.

To renew BSARA memberships please complete your details below and return with a £3 annual subscription per household to: -

50 Beacon Street.

Name:

Email address:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone Number: .
