

May 2014

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## Notice board

Pease get in touch if you can help the society prepare for an exhibition on the Pants of Alnwick, to be held at Bailiffgate Museum from 3rd Sept to 2nd Nov.

Nostalgic views of the North: 11th Nov, Bailiffgate Museum at 7:30. John Moreels, MBE, on the work of the Photo Memories Organisation to save and share over over 150,000 images of the north of England in the Ward Philipson Photographic Collection. The meeting will be open to all, with a small entrance charge for non-members.



## Annual General Meeting

*Our Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 14 March 2014 at Bailiffgate Museum.*

Unfortunately, our Chair, Peter Ennor, was unable to attend the meeting but our President, Philip Deakin stood in, beginning with a review of a busy year.

The most visible moment had been the appearance of members on the Rip Off Britain TV programme protesting against unsightly broadband boxes being installed in the conservation area by BT. Although the boxes had been installed by the time the programme went out, they were actually smaller than envisaged.

Exchanges with Berwick Civic Society had been held in the summer. An enjoyable and informative visit by our members to Berwick upon Tweed had been followed by a return visit where members of the Berwick Society were taken around Alnwick.

There was lively and enjoyable discussion at the annual Any Questions event in the autumn, several newsletters during the year, and £500 had been secured from Northumbrian Water Ltd to support the Pants Project.

The Society was making an important contribution to the development of new planning policies for Alnwick, and David Lovie's work on the neighbourhood plan was invaluable.

A major issue for the coming year would be new policies for housing: the number proposed, and the location. The potential shift of the centre of gravity of the town to the south was a concern,

as was the need for sufficient affordable homes for young people. The Society would maintain its involvement, and seek to engage the wider community.

The Treasurer, Gill Parker, reported that a number of new members had been secured during the year including five businesses. Expenditure had been less than income. Some gift aid forms had been completed and returned but more would be welcome. Although subscriptions had been increased, some members had not yet updated their standing orders.

Philip Deakin introduced the election of officers. Peter Ennor, Gill Parker and Sue Smith were all willing to stand again, were unopposed, and re-elected as Chair, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary respectively. Other Executive Committee members agreed to stand again and were also re-elected.

Alan Beith then presented the Civic Society Awards for 2013 (see page 2). Drawing on his extensive local knowledge, and experience as Chair of the Historic Chapels Trust, Alan then gave a fascinating talk on the chapels of Alnwick, comparing different styles, and outlining some of the reasons why we have inherited such a diverse legacy.



The Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Beith MP, with Civic Society Award Winners

# Civic Society Awards

*Each year the society aims to raise awareness, stimulate interest, and reward best practice by recognising projects that have made a noteworthy contribution to the built environment. Nominations are assessed on the criteria that the project makes a positive contribution to the townscape and demonstrates good design and workmanship. The size of the development does not matter, and this year three awards were for domestic projects, and one commercial.*

Rook Matthews Sayer

joined and restored two neighbouring shops in a prominent position on Market Street to create a matching, double-fronted shopfront. Judges praised their choice of traditional design and materials, and chose this project for their principal award. Those involved included Rook Matthews Sayer as client, Argyle Planning (Planning Consultant), Mascot Services (Shopfront Designers) and Mossman and Company (Main Contractor).



5, Market Street



6, Percy Terrace

materials at 6 Percy Terrace, where Mr and Mrs Lindley commissioned replacement windows in traditional style from V M Dundas (Joiners and Carpenters).

Conzen describes Belvedere Terrace as "A terrace of unified design" and "a distinct and familiar variant of the Georgian Terrace.". Pevsner describes it as "rather Dobsonesque". So it is fitting that the judges found the work for Mr and Mrs Jones at 5, Belvedere Terrace deserved recognition for the skilful reconstruction of a chimney stack in stone by John Gregory and Sons.



5, Belvedere Terrace

October the building control team arranged for the structure to be supported. As well as contributing to public safety this prevented further collapse of a listed building in the conservation area.

After presenting the awards, Sir Alan Beith commented that, ironically, some of our most valued heritage has been preserved, not by positive action, but because in the past there were not the resources to replace it. However, today we depend on (and appreciate) the work of bodies such as the Civic Society, the care of owners, and the skills of our local craftsmen to maintain the quality of our town.



Percy House



34, Narrowgate

The judges gave similar recognition to the skilful reconstruction of two more chimney stacks by presenting the Gordon Smith Award to DNA Builders for their work at Percy House for Mr and Mrs Reed.

Although they were unable to make an award for one final project, the panel of judges wished to commend an emergency intervention by the County Council at 34, Narrowgate. After the gable wall of Oscars Wine Bar failed in

## News in Brief

Research by Cambridge University for the Communities and Local Government select committee suggests that the National Planning Policy Framework may be “driving perverse behaviour”. Some planning authorities meet the performance targets despite being ineffective and displaying poor practice. Other findings are that an adopted local plan and a five-year land supply is essential for effective planning; and many factors can contribute to planning delays, including consultation with stakeholders, the attitude of some councillors and a lack of resources and skills. (<http://tinyurl.com/qfvn9lv>).

The Farrell Review of architecture and design in the built environment, has published a wide-ranging report

([www.farrellreview.co.uk](http://www.farrellreview.co.uk)), with a unifying idea that, while the sector itself acknowledges and champions the importance of “place” as a holistic way of viewing the built environment, the wider public are not familiar with the concept. The review calls for:

1. A new understanding of place-based planning and design
2. A new level of connectedness between government departments, institutions, agencies, professions and the public

## Clean-up day

On 6th April Members of the Civic Society joined a wide range of other organisations, including the Chamber of Trade, Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth, Young Firefighters, Alnwick in Bloom and local churches in sweeping pavements and clearing litter and weeds from the Town Centre.

The activities were organised by Alnwick Town Council and Northumberland County Council with the aim of cleaning up the town ahead of Easter.



3. A new level of public engagement through education and outreach
4. A commitment to making the ordinary better and to improving the everyday built environment
5. A sustainable and low-carbon future

The National Library of Scotland has scanned 6" Ordnance Survey maps from 1862 to 1942, and made them available online. The changing map of the Alnwick area can be explored here - <http://tinyurl.com/o5z2txe>



Work on developing the Heritage and Culture section of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan is now focussed on two areas.

Firstly on ensuring that we have a set of policies which will be fit for purpose: which address the critical issues; which will be workable in practice; and which are sufficiently robust to stand up to independent examination. Secondly on develop-

ing a set of Community Action Proposals: non-statutory activities which allow the community to take the development of the plan forward, and which will underpin continuing community involvement and ownership of the plan.

In doing this work, the Heritage and Culture group have been working with valuable support from English Heritage, representatives from the County Council, and other members of the wider ADNPF team and their supporting bodies.

The next stage is to combine all the different sections into a unified neighbourhood plan.



The removal of scaffolding from the Tenantry Column will have been welcomed by members. As, no doubt, will proposals to refurbish the war memorial.

The Bodleian Library in Oxford has three 19th century ballads about Alnwick on their web site:

<http://tinyurl.com/lphje9p>

## Books on Alnwick

Which books on Alnwick (and the surrounding area) do members recommend to friends? We would like to share your suggestions in the November issue. Christmas seems a long way off, but we hope that gives members plenty time to give this some thought.

Let us know your favourites, please, and your reasons for choosing them.

# Opening of the new Duke's School in 1904

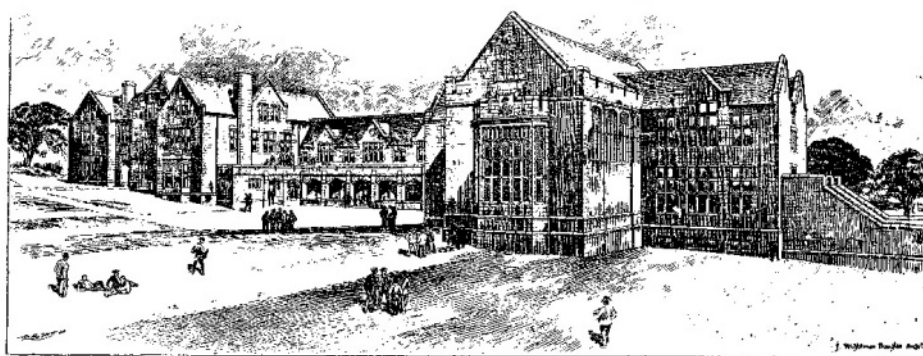
*This year marks the 110th anniversary of the opening of the Duke's School, on 27th July 1904. This is the description published by the Alnwick and County Gazette at the time.*

His Grace is to be complimented on the selection of the site of the new buildings, for, besides commanding an extensive view of some of the finest scenery, it is in other ways one of the best, if not the best, adapted in or about the town to such an institution. It is 12½ acres in extent, and on the south side of the town, in which direction several villa residences are built and in course of erection. The new buildings are of handsome design, and the fittings and furnishings throughout are of an elaborate and up-to-date character.

The buildings are admirably arranged in the form of a "recessed quadrangle" on the north portion of the grounds facing the south, having a frontage of 260 feet, with an extensive playing field in front bordered with trees, and with a macadamised playground at the back. In addition to the west gateways from Hope House Lane, a new road has been constructed which connects the grounds with Prudhoe Street opposite Grey Place, and gives an east entrance. The style of the structure is Tudor, and a good effect has been obtained by a capital grouping of the various buildings and by the severe treatment of the whole block with the exception of the examination hall. The west wing of the quadrangle is formed by the sub-warden's house and hostel for the resident masters; the kitchen arrangements being on the north side, with the caretaker's house and servant's apartments above.

On the east side is the main building, providing the English and classics instruction on the ground floor. Passing through the vestibule the main staircase entrance is to the left, and a corridor runs east, the first three rooms on the left wing being the library and reading room, art room and a class room for the lower senior boys, and on the right are two classrooms, one on either side of the examination hall, for the upper senior boys. The Examination Hall is about 50 feet by 27 feet with gallery over corridor referred to in preceding sentence, and is so arranged that the two class rooms open into it by sliding and folding partitions, giving a total accommodation for about 800 persons on prize days and similar gatherings. This magnificent hall has traceried windows, stone walls, panelled dado, and a groined high open roof. It is proposed to hang the "honours lists" and the names of old boys who deserve distinction round the walls of the room.

Passing from the examination hall and mounting the stairs to the first floor we find the following special subject rooms, viz., science room, physical laboratory, lecture theatre, masters' preparation room, chemical laboratory furnished with benches, fume closets, hydro closets, stone closets, distillation apparatus, balance closets, and other suitable appliances. In the building at the back of the "Quad" is the physical department, with gymnasium, drill room, cricket pavilion, and cloak room; and separated from these by a sliding partition is the country boys' dining hall, which is to be used also for entertaining visiting athletic teams. At the back of these rooms are the dressing rooms, professionals' rooms, and school lavatories. Overhead and entered from the first floor main staircase landing is the governors' or bursar's room, and the technical instruction workshop for plumbing, carpentry, joinery, carving, and practical mechanics. Around the three sides of the square is a stone arcading connecting the various buildings together and form-



THE DUKE'S NEW SCHOOL. ALNWICK.

HEATED WITH RADIATORS BY DINNING & COOKE, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

ing verandah on the ground floor and a balcony on the first floor overlooking cricket and football playing field. At the extreme east of the structure are two Eton fives courts, and in the basement of the various buildings are the cellars and heating chambers, store rooms for nets, field machinery, etc. The heating arrangement is by low pressure steam, with radiators to assist ventilation, and the vitiated air is removed by heated ducts and rarifying shaft. The steam is further used for heating water for the masters' baths, besides other domestic purposes.

On the wall forming the south of the "quad" and over the balcony a stone slab is set into the wall on which is sculptured the coat of arms of Hugh, second Duke of Northumberland, the founder of the school, and on the wall opposite are set the shields of the present Duke and Duchess. On the arcading of the balcony is the Latin inscription "Nisi dominus aedificaverit domum in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam" and on the arch at the back of the buildings "Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the King".

The buildings, indeed, do every credit to the architect, Mr J. Wightman Douglas, Alnwick, who, it should be mentioned, was a scholar at the old school in Green Bat. Mr J. Jackson, of Alnwick, also an old scholar, as clerk of works, has superintended the erection of the whole. Messrs Green of Warkworth were the builders, and they have done their work well, and the following were the sub-contractors:- Mr Whittle and Mr Forster, stone and wood carvers respectively; Mrs Wood, plasterer; Messrs Hewitson and Son, slaters; Mr George W. Jackson, painter; Messrs Dinning and Cooke, heating and ventilating apparatus; Mr A Green, plumber; Messrs Ramsay and Son, hardware; the firms of Twyford, Adam, Harriman, Ferguson, Doulton, and Elswick supplied the sanitary ware and fire places; Westminster Paving Co., the wood and mosaic floors; Messrs Nicholson and Wadley, the electric light fittings; Messrs Forster and Son, the oak gates; Messrs Harrison, the flag pole; North of England School Furnishing Co., and Messrs Robertson and Son, the furniture; Messrs Brady and Martin, the chemical and physical laboratory; and other materials were supplied by the Milner Safe Co., and the Expanded Metal Lathing Company,

It seems as if the Duke is determined that nothing shall retard the onward progress of the school, and with view to stimulate the efforts of the boys themselves it is intended to give annual scholarships to the value of about £100. From the above description readers will be able to gather some idea of the elaborateness of the structure and the valuable educational work to be carried on there, in which the motto of the old school will doubtless be adhered to: "A place for everything and everything in its place."

# Density of listed buildings

There are 5,565 listed buildings in Northumberland, and 250 (4% of them) lie within the Alnwick built-up area. Berwick has more buildings listed, but with its smaller size, Alnwick has the highest density of listed buildings for any town in Northumberland.

It is well known that Northumberland has one of the lowest population densities in England, with 63 residents per square kilometre. The Northumberland population of 316,000 equates to 57 residents for each listed building (across England there are 141).

In Alnwick there are only 32 people to care for each listed building.

Since we head the league table locally, the next obvious question is how we compare nationally. It turns out that with

almost 90 listed buildings per sq. km. Alnwick has a higher density of listed buildings than Durham (34 per sq. km.), Stratford-on-Avon (36), York, (40), Windsor (42), Salisbury (56), and even Canterbury (69 per sq. km.).

The figures are based on 2011 census data, the Office of National Statistics definition of a Built-up-area, and the English Heritage index of Listed Buildings.

Town	Number of listed buildings in built-up area	Built up area (sq km)	Listed buildings per sq km	Normal resident population	Residents per listed building
Alnwick	250	2.79	89.61	8,116	32
Berwick-upon-Tweed	289	4.64	62.28	13,265	46
Hexham	198	4.18	47.31	11,388	58
Haltwhistle	26	1.19	21.76	3,791	146
Morpeth	81	4.82	16.80	14,403	178
Amble	20	1.49	13.42	6,025	301
Prudhoe	21	3.46	6.07	12,075	575
Bedlington	21	3.80	5.53	16,974	808
Blyth	29	8.43	3.44	37,339	1,288
Ashington	11	6.06	1.81	27,670	2,515
Cramlington	13	8.77	1.48	33,180	2,552

## Picture quiz

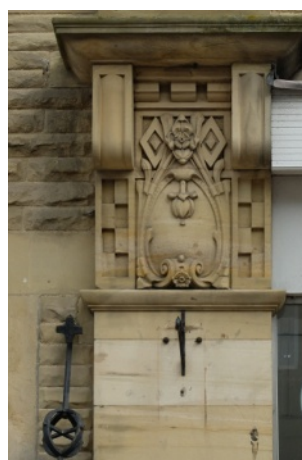
When plate glass became available, shopkeepers applied new timber fronts to existing buildings in order to expand the openings.

Console Brackets, normally in wood, and in a variety of classical designs, were used to visually complete the cornice and mark the width of the shop. The survival of so many is a tribute to the quality of seasoned wood and to skilled craftsmanship.

Can you identify these eight examples from Alnwick shops?



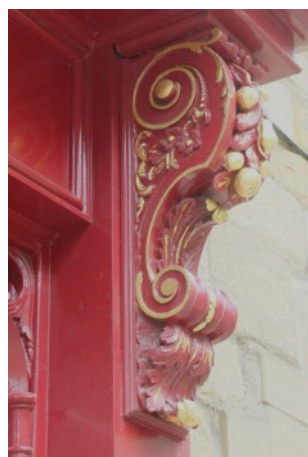
Picture A



Picture B



Picture C



Picture D



Picture E



Picture F



Picture G



Picture H

# Our position on housing plans: they are not heading in the direction that local people say they want

*The authorities are preparing for a big increase in the number of families in Alnwick. Their decisions could affect the nature of the community, the lives of local families, local businesses, and employment - for a generation. That is the whole point of a strategic plan.*

Northumberland County Council estimates that Alnwick will need an extra 1,000 homes by 2031. This is an increase of 27% - the biggest increase faced by any town in the county. Some think the estimate of 1,000 new homes is too high, but others think it is too low. A year ago, the team working on the Neighbourhood plan for Alnwick and Denwick asked the question. 40% of respondents thought that 700 more houses by 2025 sounded about right. 37% thought even that was too many. More recently, others have suggested that a figure of 1,300 more houses might be more realistic.

We think the shortage of suitable housing must be addressed. But we do not just need more homes - we need the right kind of homes, in the right place.

About half of new families around here can't afford to either rent or buy. Almost one in ten of existing homes are inadequate: in need of repair, too small, or too costly to heat. Nobody should want to force people away, or for the community to suffer because of a shortage of decent places for people to live.

One of the challenges is to find enough space. There is a real shortage of suitable land. Most people think that the right place to start building more homes is on previously developed land, inside the town. The existing centre is recognised as the heart of the town. Many of the facilities that people need are already there. Building homes near the centre will bring new life into town, and will help to maintain a good choice of shops and services. However, the way things are going, most new housing will not be built on previously developed land, but on green field sites. Most of it will be on the edges of town, not close to existing facilities. And most of it will be to the south and east, not distributed evenly around the town.

The further the town spreads in one direction, the further families will be living from facilities in the centre, the more they will have to travel, and the more they are likely to prefer to use facilities elsewhere. Some green field development is inevitable, but a lot of green field development on one edge of town is not what the people of Alnwick say they want.

The county has not identified all of the potential sites in the town. They are planning for the long-term, so it is fairly easy for them to identify a few large-scale developments. It is more difficult for them to spot all of the smaller possibilities. Doing the detailed work properly will have to draw on local knowledge. For

example, the current plan lists hardly any examples of retail premises in the centre that could be refurbished. It has not included all of the school sites that are going to be vacated.

By pooling local knowledge and imaginative thinking we reckon space for at least another 200 homes could be found near the centre of Alnwick. That would treble the number that the county have found so far. It would make a big difference to the amount of green field development that will be needed. It would mean more people could live close to existing facilities.

Finding more suitable sites for housing should lead to better decisions about the future of Alnwick. It should mean that more of the available land is properly used. It should reduce the pressure to build on precious amenities such as playing fields. It should result in more choice for local families. Anyone can suggest a site that could be used for housing, whether they own the site or not. We would like to see them do so.

We also urge our elected representatives to treat any potential housing land as a precious asset. There is a limited amount of land for housing within the boundaries of the town. With a shortage of suitable land, difficult choices will have to be made about how it should be used. So it seems perverse to allow an old garage site to be used for another supermarket rather than using it to house 30 families. If we are going to provide more housing that people can afford, then we have to make sure that all of the options for any suitable site are considered - not just the first suggestion that someone comes up with.

On current plans new families will be living further from the centre of town, and closer to the A1 than most of us. Planners need to think about where these families will want to go for shopping and other services. If they see themselves as part of the same community, then they will need to access services and facilities in the centre of town. Something needs to be done to make sure that our streets can handle the increased traffic, and to relieve the inevitable pressure on parking. On the other hand, if these families see themselves as part of a separate community, then they will surely expect more shops and services to be available on the fringes of town. Or they may prefer the choice on offer a few miles down the A1. The consequences for existing businesses and services in Alnwick must be considered.

But we also need to remember that this is a plan that is being prepared. It is not inevitable. If local people do not think things are heading in the right direction, then they need to speak out, loudly enough to be heard.

# Planning matters

In the first quarter of 2014 we have seen 22 planning applications in Alnwick, which is fairly typical for this time of year.

The application for 213 dwellings and care facility at Greensfield was considered on 6th March. Objections had been received from the Town Council and the residents of 19 properties. Peter Ennor spoke on behalf of the society. He pointed out that there was no urgent need for this type of housing, and this piecemeal approach pre-empted the Neighbourhood Plan. On the other hand, there is a real need for more affordable housing for young families. Although the application stated that 30% affordable housing would be provided, only 24 houses out of 210 would be affordable. We are also in danger of developing a two-centre town.

John Humphries spoke on behalf of residents, making similar points, and raising concerns about the impact on traffic and flood risk.

However, officers considered the proposal acceptable and in a suitable location. The application was therefore recommended for approval - subject to conditions.

Councillor Castle moved approval, and Councillor Cairns seconded.

It was agreed that the application would be permitted subject to a Section 106 agreement to secure 30% affordable housing, a contribution to the off-site sport and recreation facilities, a contribution towards infrastructure and other conditions.

The proposal for 58 apartments for the elderly on Weavers Way was also approved, subject to similar conditions.



## Viewpoint: Cycling Infrastructure

When the Duke's School opened in 1904, cycle shops in Alnwick were advertising models at seven to eight guineas. Today that would be about £750: a reasonable budget for a fairly serious cyclist, but there's also a choice of decent bikes at around half that price. Now 43% of the population has a bicycle, 8% cycle 3 times a week, a third cycle at least once a year.

Locally, the "Coast and Castles" route, from Newcastle to Edinburgh, passes through Lesbury, and is one of the most popular parts of the National Cycle Network. This year, for the first time, cyclists using it can reach Alnwick, largely off-road, using the former track-bed of the Alnwick Branch Line. Newcastle has embarked on a ten-year plan to improve cycling across the city, with the support of a £56m grant from government. Wooler is an established cycle hub, attracting visitors with a range of routes and events for cyclists.

Apart from cycle racks in the Greenwell Road car park, our current cycling infrastructure is centred on the cemetery. There are cycle lanes along South Road from The Oaks to the cemetery. A path shared between cyclists and pedestrians runs from the far side of the A1 junction to the cemetery. A shared path across the Sainsbury car park, doesn't quite connect with any other cycle facilities, but almost reaches the cemetery.

Governments approve of cycling. It helps reduce con-

gestion. It helps the environment, through reduced emissions and noise pollution. It delivers social benefits: access to services; improved road safety through reduced traffic; health benefits and reduced healthcare costs from increased physical activity.

Does this matter for Alnwick, and members of the Civic Society?

Today, most people in Alnwick live less than a mile from the centre.

More people in Alnwick walk to work than in any other part of Northumberland. But proposed housing will increase the population by 27%, and the size of the town by 13%. Much of the new housing will be more than a mile from the centre. More than half of the town lives over a mile from the planned education campus: 250 staff and 1,750 pupils will need to travel each school day. Traffic will increase on the main routes in and out of town – particularly South Road, Wagonway Road, Victoria Terrace, and Willowburn Avenue.

Better cycle routes between the centre, housing, schools, other services, and the national cycle network would help avoid congestion, reduce pressure on parking, and help draw

visitors into the town.

So investment in the cycling infrastructure does matter. Some say "nobody in Alnwick rides a bike". Well, quite. That tells us something about current cycling provision in the town, but little about the provision we will need in future.



## Diary dates

### Civic Society...

Nostalgic views of the North: 11th November, Bailiffgate Museum at 7:30. John Moreels, MBE, speaking about the work of the Photo Memories Organisation to save and share over over 150,000 images of the north of England in the Ward Philipson Photographic Collection. The meeting will be open to all, with a small entrance charge for non-members.

### ...and more

Bailiffgate Museum, from 1st July to 31st August: World War One -The Beginnings, focussing on the outbreak of war, mobilisation, the war of movement and the home front.

L. S. Lowry in Berwick and Northumberland: The Granary Gallery, Dewar's Lane, Off Bridge Street, Berwick-upon-Tweed from 21 June 2014 - 21 September 2014. An exhibition of Lowry's work in Berwick. Accompanied by other works produced in Northumberland, and the wider North-East.

## About Alnwick Civic Society

Alnwick Civic Society was formed in 1974, following the defeat of proposals to re-develop the town centre with a modern shopping area. Since then it has sought to influence development proposals, especially in the town centre and conservation area, to ensure they protect and enhance our heritage.

The society has been involved in a number of successful high profile campaigns. It continues to pursue its objectives by providing a voice for members; through dialogue with planning and conservation professionals, and like-minded organisations; by offering advice, scrutinising and commenting on development proposals; and by recognising excellence, organising public meetings, developing guided trails, and a variety of other activities.

In response to recent changes to the planning system the society is heavily involved in development of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan, and works with local partners to influence policy at a county level. It seeks to influence national policy in co-operation with other bodies within the civic movement, and was a founding member of Civic Voice.

All who share our aims can support the work of the society: by joining as an individual, family or business member; by participating in activities, sharing ideas, raising areas of concern and pointing out examples of good practice. Or simply by demonstrating pride in our town, and spreading the word about the value of our work.



## Quiz answers

- A) Dickinsons, 39-41 Fenkle Street
- B) The Outdoor Store. 8-10 Fenkle St (former Alnwick Co-operative Society)
- C) Turnbull's, 33-35 Market Street
- D) Seasons, 16 Narrowgate
- E) RSPCA, 35 Bondgate Within
- F) Flowers by Julie, 29 Bondgate Within
- G) Bari Tea, 28 Narrowgate
- H) Northumbria Pets, 41 Bondgate Within

## Who's Who?

President: Philip Deakin

Chair: Peter Ennor ([peter.ennor@gmail.com](mailto:peter.ennor@gmail.com))

Treasurer and Membership: Gill Parker

Honorary Secretary: Sue Smith

Other Executive Committee members:

Michael Apted

Elizabeth Jones

Trish Jones

Brian Lamb

David Lovie ([davidlovie307@btinternet.com](mailto:davidlovie307@btinternet.com))

Peter Reed / Newsletter ([peter.reed@aligre.co.uk](mailto:peter.reed@aligre.co.uk))

Caroline Stewart

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Facebook: [AlnwickCivicSociety](https://www.facebook.com/AlnwickCivicSociety)