



Newsletter

It's been a busy period since our last newsletter appeared in November. Since then we have held a number of events and meetings, and have been encouraged by the response, in particular, to the public meeting we held concerning the management of Frith Wood and the Unstone Loop line. We also had a good turn out for our other speaker events on Fairtrade Coffee, Reducing your carbon footprint and 'Porridge'.

If you haven't yet made it to one of our public events, do try to come along. I'm sure you'll enjoy the evening.

John Harvey - Chair

Is Traffic Calming Necessary? Let us have your views.

Whilst most of us agree that speeding traffic is both a nuisance and a danger in the Town we differ on the solutions. You will have noticed that the latest calming measures are being introduced in parts of an extended 20 mph zone with crossing points for pedestrians. We have worked with the County Council over the last three years to develop the calming plan and, although we did not get everything we wanted - cost was a major issue - a reduced scheme is being introduced. We are grateful for the support of Derbyshire County Council Officers and our County Councillors.



Road safety is paramount.

Our concern is for the safety of pedestrians – children and parents going to and from school, shoppers, and users of the library and health centre. Anyone, particularly older people or parents with a child in a push chair, will appreciate the challenge of crossing between the Library Gardens and Sainsbury's. The Town centre has narrow footpaths and pedestrians frequently have to step on to the road.

So what is the long term solution? We appreciate that speed humps are not the only or even the best answer. The police do not have the resources to enforce the 20 zone and many drivers are unaware of the speed limit. We will be

meeting the County's traffic engineers to discuss options for the future. Calming measures are very expensive.

Are there smarter solutions? - For example parked cars can slow traffic. Should a small number of regulated parking bays be introduced on High Street and Church Street? These would serve shops and businesses whilst also slowing traffic. Portsmouth has introduced a 20 zone for the whole city. How about a whole Town 20 zone which is well publicized?

Cars and vehicles are a necessary and important part of our lives but should traffic plans favour cars at the expense of pedestrians? We would welcome your views.

In this Issue

Main News

- Traffic calming in Dronfield
- New Civic Society Award
- Litter
- Frith Wood and Unstone Loop Line - update

Other news

- *Network Rail tree felling*
- *Congratulations*
- *AGM & more events*

A Dronfield Civic Society Award

The Civic Society is proposing to establish an annual award to recognize achievements in the built environment in Dronfield which have contributed significantly to improving the town in any particular year. The award can be made to individuals, businesses, local organisations, local authorities and other public bodies. Examples of activities or projects which could receive the award include new buildings, the restoration of an old building, a new shop front, a major new development, restoration and improvement of significant features in the local townscape such as stone walls, pavements and roads, the removal or improvement of an eyesore or the improvement of open spaces and gardens. The list is not exclusive and projects can be small or large. We will be launching this at our AGM in May when we will publish more information.

Frith Wood and the Unstone Loop Line

Our public meeting in January was a lively affair when Gemma Gregory from the Three Valleys project spoke about their work in Frith Wood and the Unstone Loop Line. There had been strong objections to the installation of new paths in Frith Wood and to the boardwalk and felling in Unstone and these were re-stated in the meeting. As a result a number of people volunteered to work with the Three Valleys to develop and implement more appropriate plans. The strong message was 'we liked it as it was and we don't want a park creating!'

Subsequently the Civic Society has identified the use of inappropriate (and possibly illegal) recycled materials for the Frith Wood paths and we are grateful to member Mike Romano for initially raising this concern with us.

- A meeting has now been arranged with all concerned with the Three Valleys project at DCC and will keep you informed of progress.
-

Litter on Verges and in the Countryside

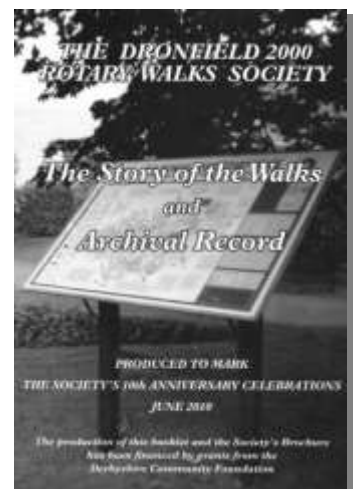
Are you angry and frustrated by the amount of litter on our roadside verges?

One of our members has recently raised this with us and we have taken it up with our County Councillors, Sue and John Allsop, who are very supportive of our concerns. The member who reported his concerns tells us that Derbyshire County Council was quick to respond to his request to clear litter on Dyche Lane. Bill Bryson, President of the CPRE, is advising those affected by uncleared litter and getting nowhere with their council to consider applying for a litter abatement order from the magistrates! Of course in the end it is the fault of the car drivers who give no thought to who might have to clear up their mess. There is now a national campaign – the Big Tidy Up. Should Dronfield get involved? <http://www.thebigtidyup.org/>



The Story of the Dronfield 2000 Rotary Walks

The Civic Society was pleased to make a donation towards the costs of two stiles when the Dronfield Rotary Walk was created in 2000 with the aim of making our local countryside available to walkers of all abilities including wheelchair and push chair users. The Dronfield 2000 Rotary Walks Society has now published a booklet to mark the 10th anniversary of this highly successful venture. ***The Story of the Walks and Archival Record*** is now available either on loan or for sale from Dronfield Library.



“Landscaping” by Network Rail

Many members who use the train station will be aware of the recent harsh landscaping undertaken by Network Rail. (*Reported in our previous newsletter*)

In December, we were approached by a number of CS members and residents asking us to raise several issues with Network Rail about the severity of the work, (*described in their letter as “Vegetation Clearance”*), the impact it has had on the landscape of the town, on wildlife, and on the resulting increase in train noise, and pointing out the fact that this area of the town is a ‘Conservation Area’.



The reply from Network Rail was predictable and dismissive, refusing to provide any evidence to support why the work had to be so severe, the number of times drivers had allegedly reported skidding under braking, and how many drivers had reported failing to see signals, all of which NR claimed were the reason for the severity of the cut.

Having raised the issue locally, via radio interviews, local newspapers, on our website and even an appearance on local ITV Calendar News, we have learned that this is a **National** rather than simply a **local** issue. We have now exchanged communications with other civic societies who face the same problem. More recently, we met up with Natascha Engel, our local MP who, along with other MPs, will be raising this issue, and the overall accountability of Network Rail in the House of Commons. We are seeking to get Network Rail to replant some of the area.

Award of MBEs

Congratulations to DCS life members Doctors Jill and Tony Bethell, who have been awarded MBE for their long standing work in raising money for various local charities.

Public meetings and talks - a success.



Over the winter months we have held a number of events and public meetings on a variety of topics, most of which are related to Dronfield, or just simply an interesting topic. These have included the public meeting relating to Frith Wood and the Unstone Loop Line (reported earlier), Fair Trade Coffee, and more recently, ‘Porridge’ – a fascinating talk given by the lead chaplain to Durham Prison.

In February, we featured one of our members, Ian C Ward who, in his working life at Sheffield University, was involved in Government programmes related to predicting future energy demands for buildings. Ian gave a talk on Energy Efficiency in our Homes as part of his project to develop a Carbon Footprint of Dronfield.

His talk initially set the scene nationally and locally and then focused on Dronfield, where he explored our energy consumption and methods of reducing it. Finally he presented some examples of low energy housing in the UK and Europe which demonstrated some of the possibilities for future developments.

----- **DON'T FORGET - Annual General Meeting – 11 May** -----

The speaker at our AGM (to be held at the Henry Fanshawe School at 7.30 pm) will be Adrian Kirkham, Head of Planning at North East Derbyshire Council. He will be talking about the proposed Localism Bill and how it will affect planning in Dronfield.

On June 15 a visit has been arranged to Clayton's Tannery, Clayton Street, Chesterfield starting at 7.00 p.m. and lasting about 2 hours. Numbers are limited to 20 but a further visit can be arranged if there is a demand for places – which we hope there will be! Clayton's has a long history – and some interesting customers. Get in touch soon! Please contact Judith Vernier (01246 418607, judithvernier@talktalk.net) to book.

FODS on track

The Friends of Dronfield Station are now well on their way to installing a feature that will commemorate Dronfield's long association with rail making and the mining industry. With generous help from Rotary (and a Civic Society member), they have obtained a mining truck which will be installed on a section of track in the garden between the station and road. The truck is currently being professionally shotblasted and painted which means it will require minimal maintenance in the future, and the Civic Society has made a donation of £250 towards this cost. Once in place and filled with flowers, it will enhance the station approach – and may even catch the eye of speeding drivers and encourage them to slow down to enjoy the sight and so observe the 20 mph limit on the bottom road!

Snippets - - - - -

The Cruck Barn, Church Street.

A planning application has been submitted to NEDDC for residential development of this Grade 2 listed building. The Civic Society is very supportive of the plans which propose a high quality and sensitive restoration of the barn, the building at the rear and the surrounding land. Full details can be seen on our web site.

The Peel Monument.

We are pleased to see the recent clean- up of the Peel monument which the Town Council has undertaken. The main culprits for the mess are the pigeons which roost and nest there and the Town Council has plans to prevent their access. We feel that the monument now looks best in its uncluttered and original state.

Church Wall.

We have been concerned for some time at the state of the Church wall on Church Street facing the cruck barn and also facing the Church Office and have raised this with North East Derbyshire District Council who is responsible for the maintenance of the Church Yard. We are pleased to see the small repair they have made but remain concerned about the general state of this boundary wall.

Liaison with Local Councillors

The Civic Society is appreciative of the work of our local councilors and maintains regular contact with them. We have, for example, recently met with our County Councillors, John and Sue Allsop to brief them on our work and to raise a number of issues. They are members of the society and we appreciate their support.

Obituary - We are sorry to report the passing of Jock Keay, a committee member for many years, many of them serving as Membership Secretary. His business life was in the field of Industrial Painting and he also served in the Royal Navy in World War Two. We send our condolences to his wife, Mary, and his family

Street Pride - The Coal Aston Conservation Area street audit will be conducted within the next few weeks.