

Free

# Place Hereford

The City's built environment forum

## New Housing Design

Alternative views on the future

Summer 2014

### Hereford Tomorrow?

A new eco way of travelling

### Farrell Review

The inspiration for our new name

### A BID for Hereford

Businesses getting together

### Hereford Now

Ross Road Flats

## Special Event - Question Time

Local politicians and activists answer your questions

**Lucy Hurds** - Liberal candidate for Parliament

**Cllr. Tony Johnson** - Leader, Herefordshire Council

**Liz Morawiecka** - Here4Hereford

**Cllr. Anthony Powers** - Leader, It's Our County

**18th September 2014 - 7.30 pm**

St. John's Methodist Church

St. Owen's Street, Hereford, HR1 2PR

Member of



Hereford Civic Society

**hcs**  
the city's built environment forum

[www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk)

# PREFACE

Welcome to our new, full colour magazine, courtesy of Birmingham Metropolitan College. Now we will have to write proper sense! The name PLACE was inspired by the Farrell Review, reported on page 7. Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering. This major report emphasises the need for proactive planning, for a Civic Champion and an urban room where aspirations are displayed and discussed, possibly around a large model of the City. I think this is the role for the Hereford Civic Society.



A newly appointed councillor in 2011 remarked that when he asked for an overall plan for the future of Hereford he was met with blank stares. Nobody could provide a plan to which everybody was working. The requirement for a new fire station, now apparently urgent, did not feature, and I understand still

does not, in the developing Local Plan (LP). The final consultation on the LP concludes on 3rd July, but we are unimpressed with the minor amendments in this latest reiteration. We fear the Planning Inspectorate will not be happy with it. Administration is complicated and there are many regulations to observe and consider but we must get ourselves better organised.

It is great news to hear about the proposals for a new Business Improvement District (BID).

A group of like-minded local business people have decided that it is time to make an investment in the future prosperity of the city. There are some good ideas for projects and the group is consulting widely to get the structure right from the start.

Their vision – “Businesses at the heart of the city, running the city like one

business. A professionally managed business with a plan, leadership and day to day delivery.” See page 6 for more on the BID.

The New University (NU) looks like being an exciting prospect for Hereford. Let’s progress these two projects quickly and fit them into a long term plan that we can all embrace.

Recently we have discussed Design Review Panels (report on back page) and the difficult hurdles to jump to make them helpful and relevant. On the wider stage, we have contributed to the Civic Voice consultation on what the political parties should be including in their manifestos.

And you will be hearing more about our plans to be Civic Champions.

- John Bothamley - Chairman

## NEWS & COMMENTS

### All of us were right

Driving south on Edgar Street, towards the roundabout with Newmarket Street, you might have noticed an empty lane on your right. This is the additional lane that the Highways Agency (HA) insisted was essential for their trunk road; it required the felling of ten mature lime trees. But it is seldom used, see the image taken at 5.30pm on Wednesday

14th May. The photograph shows the three remaining limes near the roundabout, the photographer was leaning against the only other remaining one to the north. Ten new trees have been planted to the west.

This is where local knowledge and experience beats all the traffic modelling, why did not the Highways Agency listen to us?



Extra lane Edgar Street

### Poynton update

The traffic did not stop when a member called by, last month, at the hectic junction in the centre of Poynton. Proof indeed that the “shared space” concept is working. Regular readers will know that many HCS members are “shared space” enthusiasts, and would like to see this approach rolled out across the country.

It was disappointing to see that a contractor had repaired a drain and reinstated it with asphalt instead of the original stone setts. Contractors who work like this should not be paid, nor the supervising surveyor. It was noted that a number of stone kerbs showed minor signs of settlement and damage. These beautiful improvements to our streetscapes are not easy to execute. Should we consider using more standard materials that contractors are used to dealing with? Is the effect nearly as good and more appropriate in these cash strapped times? It would be a shame if the benefits of shared space are not enjoyed because of the use of expensive materials.

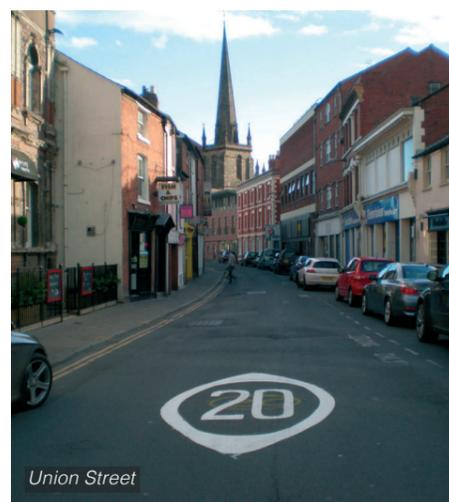
Ben Hamilton-Baillie, the designer of the scheme, was on Radio 2 in May interviewed by Jeremy Vine. He put up a spirited defence for the approach he had taken, reminding listeners that accidents were down and his disdain for traffic lights. It is time the Highways Agency was held to account to defend the use of these out dated controls. (The new Hereford link road is to have no less than six sets in its short length, but HCS is lobbying).



Moving traffic Poynton

### 20 mph has arrived

At last it is in place – a complete 20 mph limit across the city centre. A sensible move that is long overdue. But it is not enough. Newmarket Street is included for a couple of hundred yards (what is supposed to be the boulevard) but then Blue School Street is back to 30 mph! At a minimum the area should go out as far as the station and hospital; but much better still would be to see it covering the entire urban area. The developing policies of It’s Our County are believed to be moving in this direction? What enlightened thinking – a gradual move towards shared space allowing safer movement of pedestrians and cyclists. They must have been reading our missives on this enlightened approach.



Union Street

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## NEWS & COMMENTS

### Old Farmers' club

How encouraging to see new life brought back into this ancient landmark of Hereford. HCS was a supporter for this conversion into a retail outlet of this Grade II\* listed building. Little change to the exterior it remains an important part of Widemarsh Gate, the name of the junction linking the City with the new Old Cattle Market site.



Former Farmers' Club

### The local plan

Comments on the Final Version were due to be with the Herefordshire Council by 3rd July 2014 for minor amendments and forwarding to the Secretary of State. Whilst we know these are necessary documents we hesitate to comment because of the serious flaws that have not been addressed.

These include the proposed link road between the A465 and the A49 which the Highways Agency does not support. There is no credible financial plan as

to how the aspirations will be met. There is no reference to the donation of Council assets to the proposed New University, which is an on-going conversation; nor reference to the capacity of our hospital, to cope with all the additional housing and potential huge student numbers. Our view is that the supporting reports are too intertwined leading to major omissions, essentially mistakes, that the Planning Inspectorate will no doubt highlight.

### Widemarsh Gate

We could not resist publishing the picture below taken through a car windscreen on a wet and windy night in May. This "seamless" link, more a symphony of traffic lights; but these are to be removed as soon as the Link Road opens, HCS has been assured.

### The new university

Judging by the turn out at the Hay Festival at 9 o'clock on Whit Sunday morning, the proposed new university for Hereford (NU) is of interest to many people. The event was billed as "a discussion" and was chaired by Jesse Norman MP, but it felt more like a launch than a discussion.

The proposal for the NU was outlined by Karen Usher, the NU's driving force, who plugged the advantages of home grown students, whilst

accepting that most Hereford teenagers might want to see a bit of the rest of the country. The emphasis will be on engineering and preparing students for work - which can only be a positive step. Speakers included Minister David Willetts and Tata Chief Executive, David Landsman, spoke of the urgent need for engineers.

The Vice Chancellor of Bristol University, Eric Thomas, supported the idea and indicated that Bristol might authenticate the degrees earned in the first few years.

While the objectives and likely benefits are acknowledged there are some significant questions:

- Does the UK need another university when some of the smaller, and more recent, establishments are already struggling?

- Use of existing widely dispersed locations will not produce a true university ambience. What about a campus at Folly Lane or even the racecourse?
- Where will the money come from especially considering the expensive facilities and equipment needed to teach engineering?
- What effect will an influx of students have on rental and property values in the city?
- With its present financial problems should Herefordshire Council really dispose of properties at less than full market value?

It is a pity that only "It's Our County" councillors turned up to the inaugural meeting of the NU Liaison and Advisory Panel meeting on 20th May 2014!

### Contributors

**Edward Nash** – Environment Planning Consultant

**Andree Poppleston** – Researcher and architecture critic

**David Whitehead** – Founder member of HCS, historian and author, secretary of the Woolhope Club

**Stanley Vincent** – Supporter and creator of design building codes

**Bob Widdowson** – Kington mayor, Chairman Herefordshire CPRE policy

**Design** - E. Currie - Lead Designer, J. Hampton, L. Baugh & J. Baldry

**John Bothamley** – Chairman HCS, architect developer and chair of charitable grant making trust  
**David M Clark** - Retired chairman of Fownhope Parish Council and rural housing expert  
**John Faulkner** – Retired chartered civil engineer, chairman of HCS 2003-2006  
**Paula Kennedy** – Director Hereford Housing



Widemarsh Gate traffic lights

## HEREFORD NOW

### Ross Road flats

A possibly rather boring collection of flats to the west of Ross Road in Red Hill have been transformed by Hereford Housing. Upgrading with insulation added onto the outside of the walls and new double glazed windows has transformed the living conditions.

One resident commented "It's much quieter now and I look forward to

lower energy bills next winter". But what is especially striking is the use of colour. What could have been another painted white block of flats has been transformed. Panels of blue have linked pairs of windows in a simple way. The blue paint has been taken around the window reveals, removing the need to have an uncomfortable join. It is an object lesson in what can be achieved with the minimum, but judicious, use of colour.



Ross Road flats

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## FEATURE

# New housing design

The declining standard of planning applications for new housing is of concern to HCS. Over the years we have established some design guidelines against which we consider new building proposals.

These are the criteria we use:

- Eco minimalism – including orientation, thermal mass, high levels of insulation
- Logical layout - respecting landscape, creating a sense of place
- Local reference
- Respect for adjacent buildings
- Creating communities

We decided to ask a number of commentators and organisations for their views. Here is the response.

## Background

Most new housing today is built by major developers on sites of at least 40 houses. Also, there are some infill and garden developments by small contractors acting as speculative developers. Thomas Cubitt was the original “spec” developer working to standard designs in the mid 19th Century.



## Bob Widdowson writes housing is not just numbers

It is often forgotten that the roots of housing policy lie in the efforts to improve public health in the 19th century. The link was made between poor housing and the appalling death rates in Victorian cities. In succeeding years this link drove the provision of improved housing by public authorities. “That alliance was to make a far

greater contribution to improving health and increasing life expectancy over the following century than medicine” In 1919, the question of floor space standards in council housing was first raised. Private development until then was marked by the low standards of the housing it provided for working class households. In 1919, the Tudor Walters Committee recommended maximum densities of 30 per hectare and a floor space minimum of 98 m<sup>2</sup> for the equivalent today of a three bedroomed house. The result is still evident in the quality of most council housing built up until the 1950s.

Almost a century later, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) reported that the average three bedroomed home now being built was 100 square feet smaller and now the smallest in Europe. Why is this important?

Studies have shown that:

- Lack of adequate space equates with low educational achievement amongst children
- There is a link between space and anti-social behaviour
- Space plays a key role in determining the quality of family relationships

The estimated cost to the NHS of overcrowding and inadequate space is £600m per year. Consequently the link between health and housing is being

rediscovered. The National Planning Framework, although controversial, has at least imposed a duty on local authorities to align planning and health strategies. However it was the Conservative government’s abolition of the Parker Morris standards that may be said to have started the decline by signaling lower standards and as recently as 2010 Grant Shapps, then Housing Minister, proposed abolishing standards governing social housing providers. In a reversal, the government is now considering reintroducing minimum space standards.

The current housing debate is dominated by numbers reminiscent of the 1950s when quantity began to replace quality. Herefordshire’s plans to build almost 18,000 new homes by 2031 requires us to ask about the quality standards to which they will be built.



## Current offering

A five year land supply is now compulsory across the country with the majority of councils including Herefordshire failing to meet these levels. Sites with planning consent and those areas designated for housing are included, together with estimates for windfall sites. The need for multiple surveys, and a lack of an overall plan for most areas, means that developers have little alternative than to concentrate on obtaining the maximum return by cramming on as many houses as possible. Sweeteners through Section 106 agreements and the soon to be established Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provide a bit for spending on hospitals, schools, infrastructure etc. This haphazard approach hardly builds the communities that are so important for our society. The application off Aylestone Hill illustrates this well, essentially a cul de sac for umpteen houses with no community facilities and no real linkages into the neighbouring areas.

## Robert Adam Architects

Today’s discipline and practice of traditional urban design can be brought together under four broad headings: Repeat success, life is complicated, do not waste space, save energy locally! As the advantages of traditional urban design are increasingly recognised, it has become one of the major forces

in the design of new places and the remaking of towns and cities. Conventional urban design continues nonetheless and, as issues such as pedestrian priority and street-based design become more widely recognised, the division between conventional and traditional urbanism becomes less clear.



## Paula Kennedy from Hereford Housing

Herefordshire Housing recognises that well-designed housing can deliver many social, economic and environmental benefits. The Association wants to provide housing that not only looks good but also:

- Offers maximum functionality – meeting the needs and aspirations of residents, both now and in the future
- Contributes to the neighbourhood and responds to the physical and social context
- Is easy to build and maintain at optimum whole life cost

## Berkeley Group focuses on Question 1.2 of the Farrell Review

How can the ‘everyday’ quality of our housing, public spaces and buildings be significantly improved?

Berkeley believes that the quality of places and buildings should be at the heart of local plan-making and decision-taking. Eight actions can help achieve this:

1. Embed the idea of social sustainability into the design and planning of all new housing and mixed-use development.
2. Engage with the community at the earliest stage and design in a collaborative way.
3. Empower the public and their decision makers to contribute effectively by routinely offering them design training.
4. Enhance the culture, competence and capacity of planning authorities.
5. Ensure that design review is adequately resourced and widely available.
6. Establish consistent design standards which are clear in their purpose, aim high and allow for imaginative solutions.
7. Design and build for the long term.
8. Use public land and publicly funded projects to demonstrate how good new housing can be.

- Is sustainable, minimizing the impact on the environment
- Is tenure blind to promote and encourage social cohesion

The Association is keen to promote innovation in the design of its new homes and wants to explore new approaches to design and construction. We aim to ensure the efficient planning and delivery of new homes, maintaining a high standard that achieves value and results in high levels of resident satisfaction with the finished product.

As a landlord and developer we operate across the county of Herefordshire

and we recognise that differing local contexts require differing local design solutions. We do not operate a one size fits all approach and seek to analyse the existing architectural fabric within a locality and reflect that when appropriate in a contemporary style.

In summary then, whether we are developing new homes or refurbishing one of our existing schemes the principles of our design brief are to create sustainable, socially mixed yet cohesive communities that do not stand alone or isolated but are rooted, supported by and supportive of the existing communities.

## FEATURE

# Better places

**We make no excuse for again referring to the Farrell Review (p. 7). Here, much is made of the need for much more attention to be paid to the quality of the built environment, from better education through to encouraging planning officers and councillors in design matters. Also, we need fewer personal prejudices and influence when planning officers' recommendations are overturned by councillors.**

## Edward Nash considers - drivers for future housing design

The childhood realisation of the geographic variety of the built environment led me to a career in architecture, urban design and planning. Why our built environment has taken the form it has remains as interesting as changes in fashion.

Development that took place incrementally, often over centuries, brought particular qualities or organic form to villages and towns. In the 18th and 19th Centuries burgeoning urban economies could support and demand the consciously planned estates, ordered streets and squares matching the aspirations of emerging business and professional classes. The 20th

Century brought waves of large scale public and private housing in a quest for more egalitarian standards and the suburban dream. But what is driving housing design and character now?

Without the public sector investment that supported much of the 20th century housing growth, new build housing only expands when the cycles of house price increases reduce development risk and, in turn, deliver subsidised affordable housing.

Through the last development boom, rising prices saw regeneration of previously developed land. Through the most recent recession the clamour for new houses has forced focus onto undeveloped land around established towns and cities, in a climate where achieving housing numbers appears more important than anything else.

Now, in many ways, there is a conspiracy of interest between how strategic planning policy works and the development industry responds, that is probably more influential in determining the character of new housing than anything else.

The rolling out of strategic Core Strategy processes creates a system in which landowners work with house builders to promote their land in their mutual interest. The consequence is that the only significant creators of new housing tend to be the large national house

builders who are expert in a competitive land market working to a necessary business model.

The biggest challenge facing us in the coming decades is how to create the regeneration models that can replace so much of the 20th Century's suburban sprawl with new spatially efficient and sustainable models of edge of centre urbanism, where good living standards could combine so well with the sense of the well managed Public Realm.

## David M. Clark on neighbourhood planning

There is a quiet revolution taking place in Herefordshire. More than 80 of the parishes outside the city are embarked on do-it-yourself Neighbourhood Plans (NP). There is real energy and professionalism in the approaches. Eardisley attracted an 85% response to their survey.

Fownhope, like most parishes, struggled to cope with the burden of documents in the emerging Core Strategy, with which our NP has to be in unison. We now have our plan which focuses on our needs and involves every member of our community. Estate agents stress the obvious appeal of life in Fownhope – services, community life, countryside, footpaths and access to the city. What were once small country cottages that struggled to qualify for improvement grants in the 1960s have now been extended – almost one in three has had planning consent for upgrades in the past 15 years. Rural buyers can feel confident that no other homes can be built outside a handful of key villages. Our Neighbourhood Plan can decide how many new homes, whether to extend the village envelope, and ensure that housing associations get a slice of the action. But can we do anything to restrict the right to extend homes in the open countryside, or allow just a few more new homes outside the village?



## AMAZING PLACES OF HEREFORD



### The Old Market

I approached the new development for the first time, on foot, along the 'ring road' from Bath Street. This enabled me to sharpen my perceptions of recent buildings in Hereford by revisiting the Magistrates Court (2001) and the Blueschool Street façade of the Maylord Shopping Centre (1986). The former with its brick pilasters, bronze fenestration and stone entrance, cast an eye, I thought, to the classical past, whilst the latter, more domestic in its modelling, using brick, stone and iron, also seemed quite substantial. This was architecture, recently enshrined as such, by the new edition of the Buildings of England: Herefordshire; but looking across the road there was something less substantial – a designed townscape.

Down Newmarket Street the high brick walls of the Odeon and Debenhams seem to defy gravity. However, their bulk is not oppressive because of the spaciousness of the street. The

grassy tree-lined bank marking the old city wall and the new cottages in Wall Street prevent it from becoming a canyon. Crossing the duel carriageway from Widemarsh Street also worked well. The traffic is indeed, calmed, and the connection between the old town well managed – aided by a rejuvenated Farmer's Club. The new square, lavishly paved with York stone along with the vista down the boulevard to TK Maxx is also inviting. On the other hand, the Costa building – with white panels set in timber frames – tries to be interesting but is a weak beginning to the development and the industrial detailing of the multi-storey car park above steals the scene. The cafes and eating houses on the north side of Garrick Lane (a bit of irony here), which should surely be sited in the old town, also enliven the streetscape with their topiary and furniture. However, the warehouse theme of endless uniform shop fronts, under broken gables, relieved by the occasional blind opening, is

tedious. Why not let the shop owners design their own frontages? The high point of the street is the Old Market Tavern, which has been smartened-up with white paint. It suggests that a little more stucco – or its modern counterpart – might well have helped to relieve the tedium of the uniform brickwork. Back on the north-side of Garrick Lane the building line breaks to open-up views of the Waitrose car park. A good hedge might have saved the pedestrian from this, keeping the higher views towards the Hereford United lights and, on a good day, Aylestone Hill beyond. Two more timber cubicles await tenants.

From TK Maxx the view up Auctioneers' Walk ends quite well with Debenhams' entrance articulated in an inviting manner, and with further theatre, the street turns to reveal the bosky scenery across New Market Street with All Saints' spire drawing the satiated shoppers across to the old town – and Tesco's! The east side of Auctioneers' Walk repeats the warehouse theme and most of the shops remain un-let. On the west there is slightly more diversity but the strangely unfinished roof line is rather disconcerting. Outside, running round to Edgar Street, it seems the bleak walls are to be disguised with climbing hydrangea, as is the timber clad service area opposite Richmond Place. On my short walk I did not see anything of architectural merit but as streetscape it works quite well and, being insubstantial, the buildings can easily be

changed or removed. Regrettably, most of my neighbours seem to be rather excited by the shopping experience, so in the short term the old town will suffer, but maybe in the long run this will bring down rents and rates and, Phoenix-like a new Hereford of small independent traders will arise. We hope!

- David Whitehead – Hereford historian and author

### Councillor Felicity Norman knows what she wants

At the Council Meeting on 7th March 2014 Councillor Felicity Norman proposed that:

*"This Council calls on the Executive to consider how it can, through planning and other housing policies, influence the design of new housing, (especially affordable housing), and encourage builders to adopt the highest possible energy efficiency standards, Passivhaus, AECB Silver Standard or similar. Orientation and suitability for renewable energy systems, especially passive solar and large-scale active solar should also be included at the design stage of any development."*

Unfortunately our Councillors only agreed that proposals "should" consider these matters.

## HEREFORD TOMORROW?



### Take a ride

Two young designers have come up with a brilliant idea for getting about the country cheaply, environmentally responsibly and conveniently. Could we adapt the idea for Herefordshire?

Hitchhiking used to be so popular that hitchhikers, in the '70s, would queue up to stick out their thumbs at the most popular spots. No longer. It is very rare to see a hitchhiker on the road in Britain today. Strangely enough, though, you can still get picked up hitchhiking around England, Scotland and Wales if you are in a pair; you get to where you are going in about the same length of time as it would take to travel by coach. Hitchhiking alone as a woman, it would be hard to drive yourself to where you're going faster than you get there by thumb – people seem to feel a sense

of responsibility for leaving a woman by the side of the road.

Colin Rose and Katherine Hibbert designed the Liftplatz – their idea for the first in a network of designated hitchhiking spots across the country, featuring shelter and creature comforts for hitchhikers, as well as cardboard dispensers for making signs, and a range of merchandise. Their design for a shelter built from surplus road signs was Highly Commended in the RIBA Forgotten Spaces competition in 2011.

It occurs to us at HCS that this blue sky thinking could be applied to our county, both for regular commuting and social trips into and out of Hereford, and the market towns. With such poor bus coverage, and long journey times visiting every village on the way, might it be possible to regularise and make hitchhiking respectable? The Council's

valiant Car Share Scheme, though well advertised, is hardly a resounding success. With few pairings, one person driving and one being the paired passenger, the benefits are small and the Council has taken a big advertising bill.

If we make hitchhiking respectable with designated safe hitchhiking areas, and a bundle of signs to show where you want to go, might this just make us the most transport eco-friendly county in the country? To start with, existing bus shelters could double up as hitchhiking platz, no doubt the bus companies would object – even when there is only one bus a day! So our suggestion is to have a single sign on the shelters, they belong to the County not the bus companies. This is sharing capitalism, one can opt for which ever mode of transport one prefers. Of course there could be conflict in the City at busy times; here perhaps the hitchhiking platz should be separate and on the periphery of the City. Not a word about dangers please. This county has a good record and the number of unsavoury characters about is minimal.

The media must not highlight concerns, we plead for them to spotlight the benefits. A disc could be displayed in car windscreens saying you have a hitchhiker on board. A token pound could be a gift to thank the driver for stopping – go away licensing

department – the pound will be a gift – we are not talking about hackney carriage licensing. If only we can get shared space incorporated into our town and city centres – see our web site – which assists us into becoming more respectful of each other, then this project will further increase our concern for our fellow citizens. We will grow to know our neighbours and we will have saved gallons of fuel. Let's do it!

*If you have an "inspiration" for Hereford send it to us and we'll be pleased to promote it.*



## What is a Business Improvement District (BID)?

BIDs are groups of businesses who come together to make an investment in their own local area. A steering group carries out extensive consultation with businesses to determine what projects would most help the local economy to thrive. They publish a business plan which sets out a range of projects, and how much money will be needed from each business to deliver this plan. Each eligible business in the area gets a postal vote to say whether it is for or against setting up a BID.

If the vote is successful, all the businesses in the area will invest in the BID to deliver the selected projects by paying an annual levy. The BID will last for five years. There are already over 170 BIDs across England which are successfully delivering exciting projects to make their local area more prosperous, more attractive, safer and better promoted than ever before.

A group of Hereford business people want one here. Just a few reasons why...

- Almost every BID has had a massive majority for re-election after five years. Proof how valuable businesses find them.
- Many businesses actually save money as a result of the work that the BIDS do on their behalf.

- The potential is huge; other BIDS manage markets, car parks, even regeneration projects.

The protagonists say:

*"I expect the improvements the BID will deliver in Hereford through its various projects will undoubtedly benefit the local business economy and attract more businesses and visitors to Hereford. All of this is likely to have a positive effect on our own business and those of the local professional community generally."*

- Matt Hays, Partner at Harrison Clark Rickerbys Solicitors

*"I recognised a void in Hereford city, with no form of traders association, city centre partnership, or any similar entity to look after the interest of businesses in the city centre. I took the approach that if we were going to do this, we'd do it properly, from zero to best practice in one step. I didn't want to create a body that had no mandate, no money and no ability to deliver, so set about creating the most effective body possible: A Business Improvement District."*

- John Jones, Partner Philip Morris & Son

*"The BID will invest time in creating a better town centre to live, work and shop. This will create employment and that means more customers for us all."*

- Dan Guerche, General Manager, Play Nightclub



HCS fully supports this initiative. This proposal is well overdue, we should have had one years ago. Running a city has become a complicated matter and our unitary authority and parish council (Hereford City Council) have different responsibilities.

Organisations have come and gone – Hereford Partnership etc. – but “we” never seem to get it right. Meetings without resolution, deals behind closed doors and muddled consultation have held us back. Let us hope that this initiative will make the change. It is based on local businesses, and it does not have appointed directors like the unelected Local Enterprise Partnership.

HCS remains non political but when politics impinge on the built environment we have a point of view. From what we hear, this BID really will work for Hereford.

### Key points about a BID

- The levy is an investment in the prosperity of the local area by the businesses located there.
- The BID projects are extra to work done by existing groups or by statutory organisations. It is not intended to replace public sector responsibilities for which businesses pay business rates.
- All the businesses who benefit invest jointly.
- BIDs give businesses a strong and co-ordinated local voice.
- The more support businesses give the BID, the better it will be able to deliver what businesses need

## PLANNING MATTERS

**Andree Poppleston continues to search planning applications for interesting and controversial schemes. All applications are accessible using the Herefordshire Council website - [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk)**

### 141076

**Proposed refit of retail unit including new shop front and signage.**

- A. Marshall

This application is within the conservation area. The applicant, who hides behind an individual's name on the application form, appears to be 3G, a multinational.

Their intention as stated is:- "Strip out and refit retail unit including a new shop front to bring it up to date with the organisations current branding"

Respectfully the branding of Hereford's High Town is rather more important to

those who live and visit this historic city. The retention of the Victorian shop front, whilst possibly not being the original one, is part of the developing history of Hereford.

This application retains a single door and is nothing more than a reworking to meet the company's branding. That is not sufficient reason to overrule the principals of the conservation area. Further it is likely that a further application will request consent to install a shutter as the proposal includes a small unprotected porch likely to be used as a urinal at night. The Hereford Civic Society urges refusal of this application.

### New Fire Station

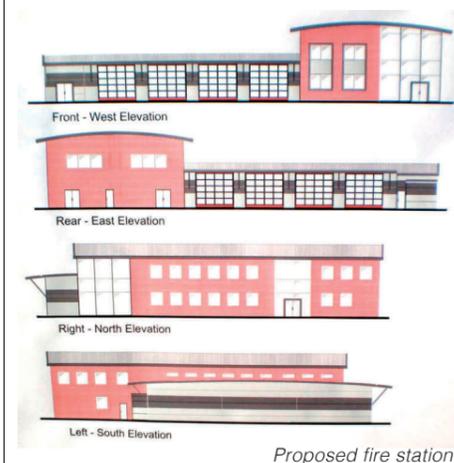
An architect's plan was, essentially, all there was to read at the open Evening (14/5/14) to explain the proposed move to the former Bath Street Working Boys' Home site within the conservation area. This is not public consultation. Written

answers were not available to these questions, which any reasonable citizen surely has a right to know.

- Which other sites were considered in the sequential test of alternatives?
- Why did these sites fail to be suitable?
- Why was this proposal not put into the Core Strategy proposals?
- What are the failings of the present fire station and what are the running costs?
- What is the cost of the new station and running costs?
- Has retaining one or two of the principal existing buildings and building around them been considered – there appears to be plenty of space for car parking?
- Why have plans for a joint police/fire service facility been abandoned? (The new Bromsgrove joint centre is impressive).

Answers to the above would make it so much easier for us all to understand the reasoning

behind, what appears to us, a flagrant overriding of a designated conservation area. Our history is an important part of our lives, there are several other places where this 21st century proposal could be built, in its own time becoming part of our collective experience. It fits on the Link Road. Planning application expected July.



## REVIEW

### The Farrell Review

**Proactive planning needs to be at the heart of policy-making, according to the Farrell Review, an industry-wide review of architecture and the built environment, led by Sir Terry Farrell and commissioned by Culture Minister Ed Vaizey, published 31st March 2014.**

After a wide-reaching consultation process including workshops throughout the country, the findings have been compiled into a report with 60 recommendations. Among the key recommendations was a need for there to be a revolution in the planning system to make it proactive rather than reactive, anticipating, rather than responding to, the future needs of our towns and cities. By planning proactively like other countries

do, we would anticipate issues like the national housing shortage or susceptibility to flooding and address them before they reach crisis levels.

The Review also called for architecture and the built environment to be taught as early as possible in school education and through many different subjects. Each local authority should nominate "Civic Champions" – a built environment professional from the private sector and an elected member to champion local design quality and engage with neighbourhood forums. Built environment practices should enter into partnerships with local authorities to "champion the civic" through education and outreach and create "urban rooms" where plans can be displayed and discussed.

Design Review Panels should become

PLACE Review Panels using the acronym **PLACE** to describe the key disciplines of **Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering** to ensure they are represented. Public-sector developments that are not subject to normal planning, such as national infrastructure projects, should be subject to PLACE Reviews.

The report said that Government should reduce VAT rates on renovation and repair to 5% and retrofitting buildings rather than demolishing them and building new. The Treasury should recognise building design as closely connected to manufacturing and acknowledge its true value for exports.

"The issues covered by this Review are not of academic or specialist

interest," said Sir Terry Farrell. They are relevant to some of the most pressing and important issues of our time like the shortage and affordability of housing; the urgent need to reduce our carbon emissions and the flooding crisis that recently afflicted so much of the country. Through proactive, rather than reactive, planning we can tackle these problems.

"I hope this Review will be the catalyst for change and the start of a big conversation about our built environment, making it a major public issue like health and food. There are few things that are more important to us than the places we live in. I look forward to continuing to work with government and industry to translate this vision into a reality."

The full report: [www.farrellreview.co.uk](http://www.farrellreview.co.uk)

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## MEETINGS

### 17th April 2014 – Jamieson and Tittle – Design Review Panels

Hereford architect, Angus Jamieson, was joined by David Tittle, trustee of Civic Voice and chief executive of MADE, the design consultancy. Angus is a strong advocate of Design Review at some stage within the planning process, but with professional people rather than just those “interested in buildings”. David described his experiences running design reviews, sometimes referred to by local authorities, sometimes by developers seeking an easier run with their planning applications.

Both agreed it is not straight forward to organise. It was considered that Herefordshire Council might welcome a panel but that funding was unlikely to be available. Professional members of a panel would expect some level of remuneration; and is there a sufficient pool of talent within Herefordshire willing to contribute?

Examples from other West Midlands areas were mentioned but all suffer from size and a less than dynamic reputation. Whilst there was a general view within the room that design review, at the pre-application stage, is a good thing, it was felt that further consideration should be given to a Panel covering a wider area than just Herefordshire. Perhaps we should share our views over the summer, possibly through our magazine, with an object of putting forward a proposal in the autumn.

### 15th May 2014 – John Faulkner – Herefordshire’s River Bridges

Our long-standing member is a civil engineer with wide experience of major projects across the world. His illustrated talk took us from Whitney to the Forest of Dean showing an amazing range of bridges built in a multifarious number of ways. Whilst we are aware of them, we seldom have

time to stop and step to one side, to see views from the river bank.

There are some particularly notable ones, not least Hereford’s Old Wye Bridge built in 1490, replacing a timber one, and much repaired and altered over the centuries.

The bridge at Bredwardine is the country’s first in brick. The construction team for the steel beam bridge at Bridge Sollers (2004) included John’s grandson, now also a civil engineer and is known to the family (and now to the HCS) as Richard’s Bridge. Several great stone piers still stand in the Wye, that formally carried the railway line from Hereford to Gloucester and Ross and the design of these bridges showed the influence of Brunel, including the original railway crossing near our very own elegant Sustrans’ Connect2 bridge, taking the cycleway to Rotherwas. For reference John recommended “Bridges of the River Wye” by Alan Crow.

No Hereford meeting on bridges could end without a discussion on whether we want a new bridge – east or west side?!

### 19th June 2014 – Summer Walks – from Rotherwas Chapel

A sunny summer evening, the Chapel of our Lady at Rotherwas dating from the 14th Century and updated by Pugin in 1884, and good news about the Skylon Park, were the backdrops for an enjoyable evening. Suzanne, in charge of an ambitious Big Lottery bid, showed us the remnants of the National Filling (Munitions) Factory. Most poignant was the massive space with a light framed roof with an enormous span that has stood for nearly a century. Hopefully it is the site of an interpretation centre about the war work of the women who made the thousands of shells in both world wars.

The Enterprise Zone site does not look much different from when we last visited

in Summer 2012. It has a parkland feel with old oaks and woodland to the north, albeit the roads are now tarmaced.

However much work has gone on behind the scenes; 5.5 acres have been sold and are under development; 40,000 square feet of workspace is already built or under construction. Eight plots are under negotiation - which represents about 40% of the land available for development.

The Hereford Records storage facility is well under construction, being built to Passivhaus standards - the first in the country for this type of building. Prosecco and canapes completed this perfect summer evening.

### 21st June 2014 – Civic Day – Our contribution

As members of the nationwide Civic Voice movement, Hereford Civic Society

had a pagoda in High Town to explain to Herefordians their latest aspirations to become Civic Champions.

Encouraged by the Farrell Report, of March 2014, which suggested architecture and planning should have a higher profile, HCS wants to be the leader of that drive to consider all aspects of PLACE which stands for ‘Planning Landscape Architecture Conservation and Engineering’.

Such was the enthusiasm of visitors that eleven new members were recruited.

Civic Champions are:

- planning proactively for the future
- not just criticising poor planning applications!

Further information from:

[www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.herefordcivicsociety.org.uk)

## Sister Societies

We meet regularly and all societies welcome visitors. Information on talks and news from:

### Kingston History Society -

[www.kingstonhistorysociety.com](http://www.kingstonhistorysociety.com)

### Ledbury Civic Society -

[www.ledburycivicsociety.org](http://www.ledburycivicsociety.org)

### Leominster Civic Society

[www.leominstercivicsociety.co.uk](http://www.leominstercivicsociety.co.uk)

### Ross-on-Wye Civic Society

[www.rosscivic.org.uk](http://www.rosscivic.org.uk)

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**Single £15 pa. / two memberships at the same address £25 pa.** Questions?

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## Join By Cheque

Complete the form below, cut along the dotted line and return to:

The Treasurer, Hereford Civic Society, 60 Broomy Hill, Hereford HR4 0LQ.

### Full name (please print):

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## Forth Coming Events

All meetings at the Kindle Centre, by ASDA, Belmont, Hereford HR2 7JE. 7.00pm refreshments for a 7.30pm start (unless specified otherwise)

### Thursday 18 September 2014 DIFFERENT VENUE

Question Time chaired by Jake Bharier  
Local politicians and activists – It is your agenda! Send in your questions please. See panel on front page for participants and venue.

### Thursday 16 October 2014

AGM and Modern Hereford  
A review of Question Time and some pragmatic suggestions to create a vibrant and popular city.

### Thursday 20 November 2014

Joint meeting with CPRE Herefordshire  
A debate on the built environment vs the countryside.

### Thursday 18 December 2014

Time Lapse on Hereford – Jason Hodges  
Artistic study of Hereford Museum artefacts and reconstructions of Gatehouses. Christmas drinks.

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in the letters, reviews, news and features in this issue are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the members of Hereford Civic Society.

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## YOUR OPINIONS

### Our contra flow cycle route proposal

#### Inspiration? – Spring HCS NEWS, p.6

I have lived in St. Owen Gate since 1996 and walked up and down the very stretch of St. Owen Street and feeder roads depicted in the map at all times of day for years.

Throughout the day, it is often necessary for people to walk in the road to make way for wheelchairs, push chairs, elderly people with walking aids and shopping trolleys, etc. Pedestrians are risking their lives at all these intersections. The last thing we need is silent cyclists cruising casually along from the wrong direction. Some are illegally making their own contraflow now - none of whom seems to have a bicycle bell or know how to use it to warn people they are coming.

“A single lane leaving the City is considered quite acceptable”, but it certainly is not acceptable to anybody who has walked or driven a car down that busy stretch of St. Owen Street at peak traffic hours. At present it keeps heavy vehicle traffic moving while providing one of the very few pedestrian crossings in Hereford that actually works reasonably well. Why not leave it alone?

- Anne Harbour



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