



THE STEYNING SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Registered Charity No. 269859 www.steyningsociety.org.uk

February 2023

Dear Members,

AGM 2023 and Awards evening – Friday, 21st April 2023

The Steyning Society's AGM will be held on Friday, 21st April 2023 in the Steyning Centre at 7.30pm. All members are invited to attend. This year 2023 marks the Diamond Jubilee of the founding of the Steyning Society in 1963. We are celebrating it with drinks and nibbles and a new Awards Scheme. The first awards and certificates will be presented by the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, Lady Emma Barnard, during the course of the evening.

We are delighted that Peter Legge, our local woodturner, has donated a beautiful carved wooden bowl as a gift to the Society. We have therefore named the awards as the ***The Steyning Bowl Awards***. They will honour those individuals, groups or businesses who have contributed major enhancements to the character and well-being of Steyning and its local community in the last few years.

We believe that it is really important to acknowledge people's hard work and commitment. There are numerous projects, businesses and excellent initiatives in Steyning and surrounding areas that make a difference and support our communities. The Awards will enable us to recognise these achievements, so we want to hear about your nominations.

Examples include businesses and initiatives that support local residents and groups, the creation of attractive new buildings, the restoration of an old building or feature, improvements to the local street scene, such as planting and landscaping, or environmental work to enhance the town or its surrounding countryside.

If you would like to nominate someone, a group, business or scheme for an award, please do so by Friday 31st March 2023 via the Society's website - <https://steyningsociety.org.uk> which sets out the timetable and criteria. Just a simple nomination is all that is required.

Queen Elizabeth Benches

We have agreed with Steyning Parish Council to work with them in replacing the two old and dilapidated benches opposite the Church on either side of the vehicular entrance into St

Cuthman's Field. We will be replacing the bench beside the statue of St Cuthman with a new bench dedicated to the memory of Queen Elizabeth II, while the Parish Council will be replacing the bench on the opposite side of the entrance with a new bench marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Both benches will be suitably inscribed and the Society's bench will show that it was given by the Society. The final details are being worked out with the Parish Council, so we hope that the benches will be installed within the next month or two. We believe that, together, these benches will provide a fitting tribute to Her Majesty and that they will improve the amenities of the field.

Steyping Local Heritage List

The Steyping Local Heritage List has been approved by Steyping Parish Council. It now has to be adopted by Horsham District Council. It will then be printed and available to purchase.

Brotherhood Hall

Last year, the Society made a grant to the Steyping Grammar School Foundation as a contribution to the cost of a feasibility report from Savills for the future use of Brotherhood Hall and the other old buildings in Church Street. The report recommended that the buildings should be converted to residential use because commercial, community and educational uses are unlikely to be economically viable.

A working group met the Foundation's Trustees last month to discuss the report and future uses of the old buildings. The Trustees told us that they would prefer to find a non-residential use for the buildings and that Horsham District Council and Heritage England want any application to redevelop the site behind the Hall to contain a proposal for the long-term use of the Hall and the adjacent frontage to Church Street.

We learnt that Bohunt, who now run the Grammar School, have no interest in using the old buildings for school purposes or for ancillary purposes, such as a VI Form centre, a theatre workshop or a careers centre, even if this is supported from the income earned on the money received from the redevelopment. Bohunt believe that the buildings are too far away from their Shooting Field site, that their use would present safeguarding problems and that they will obtain whatever facilities they need from the Government.

The Trustees told us that, with the help of a grant from Horsham District Council, they are investigating the possible use of at least some of the old buildings as a business centre which provides serviced office accommodation.

We have encouraged the Trustees to take professional advice to help them come up with a vision for the long-term use of the buildings from one of the specialist firms that do this kind of work and have given them details of some of these firms. We remain in contact with the Trustees.

The Trustees have told us that they would welcome support from anyone with skills or knowledge that might help with the problems associated with the old Grammar School site. Anyone interested in finding out more about supporting the Foundation either as a Trustee

or in another capacity should contact the Foundation's chairman, Richard Goodman. His telephone number is 07773 631280 and his email address is rgoodman@sgs.uk.net.

Cancellation policy for coach trips

We have had to consider the Society's policy about cancellations of bookings for coach trips because the cost of hiring the coach, which is the most expensive part of the trip, now becomes payable six weeks before the trip, even if the trip is subsequently cancelled. As this means that we must decide whether to go ahead with a trip six weeks before the trip, we have decided to adopt the following policy for all future coach trips

"Booking fees are transferable provided you notify us before the trip. They will not be refunded if you cancel your booking less than 42 days before the trip unless we find a substitute after all the unsold places have been sold."

We understand that you may sometimes need to cancel a booking at short notice but we hope that you will understand why this is necessary. Please remember that if you do need to cancel, you can instead arrange for a substitute to take your place and that the substitute need not be a member of the Society. However, please remember to give details of your substitute to the organiser of the trip **before** the date of the trip – otherwise, your substitute may not be allowed to board the coach.

A call for Volunteers

Finally, we do have some vacancies on the Committee at the moment and we would very much welcome help with running the Society. The Committee meets four times a year. Please would anyone interested in joining the Committee contact Nick Bennett (nicholasbennett20@btinternet.com), Jane Oxley (mike.jane@btinternet.com), Catherine Mant (cmantsteyningsoc@gmail.com) or Tony Struthers (tonystruthers@me.com).