



Interpretation Panel Boards
Refresh on Unstone Line

Dronfield Civic Society

Caring for our local environment since 1989

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Welcome to the December newsletter

In this newsletter we bring you up to date on what the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework will mean for north east Derbyshire. Your Civic Society took part in the consultation on these changes which included the potential introduction of statutory housing targets for local authorities and the re-defining of areas of Green Belt as Grey Belt.

Civic Voice, the national charity for civic societies, responded to the House of Lords Grey Belt Inquiry to stress the essential role of local plans in guiding responsible development without undermining the core purposes of the Green Belt. We report on the work being done and the new approved timetable for a new Local Plan for 2024-2044.

Two members of the committee represented the Civic Society at a meeting organised by Cllr Dale in October about the timber ramp footbridge. The Society along with FoDS (Friends of Dronfield Station) had earlier received an email stating the ramp would be demolished in November. As you will note, the footbridge remains, but probably not for much longer. A further meeting is taking place before Christmas and the e-newsletter Ripples will provide a further update to the piece on page 2.

Earlier in the year the Society was delighted to receive a considerable bequest from the late Mr and Mrs G.M. Rodgers to make improvements in and around Coal Aston. We have begun to allocate some of the funds which you can read about on page 7.

We'd like to wish all our members, friends and supporters a Happy Festive Season and New Year.

DCS Management Committee

Issue 55
December 2024

*Can you help
Dronfield Civic Society
by stepping up to join
the Committee?*

*We are a small team
of individuals with
interests in planning,
heritage, conservation
and environmental
enhancement with a
desire to help make
the town a more
pleasant place to live,
work in and visit.*

*We invite you to
join us.*

Maintaining a Local Asset

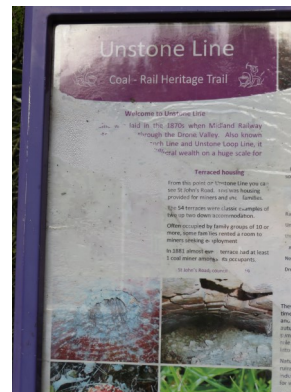
It is twelve years since Dronfield Civic Society was awarded a Community Action Grant from Derbyshire County Council to create a heritage and environmental trail along the former mineral railway known locally as Unstone Line.

Since 2012 very little maintenance has been needed to keep the information panels looking their best for the many walking groups, historic railway enthusiasts and dog walkers who regularly visit the site.

One of the information boards near the village hall fell over during high winds. The board and its information panel were missing for a considerable time. It was important to have that panel in place as it marked the start of the trail and so a committee member began the quest to get the board and panel reinstated. Eventually a new wooden board was provided by DCC but the information panel upon it had become so degraded by the weather that it was unreadable. There began another quest to get a replacement.

Finally after four months and thanks to the excellent service of Whittington Moor Print Works and Councillor Alex Dale who organised a funding source, the heritage and environmental trail along Unstone Line is once more complete.

Unstone Line is one of DCC's smaller sites and only matters of health and safety such as fallen trees are dealt with. It is therefore very important to the CS that the trail information is monitored and maintained for the future.



Above: Before and after images of the interpretation panel.

Right: With thanks to Robert Hardcastle who cleaned the poster cases and repaired the top of the wooden board below Spring Bank.



YOUR CIVIC SOCIETY RELIES ON VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP TO KEEP OUR TOWN AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE. HELP US TO KEEP THIS SHARED SPACE BEAUTIFUL FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. JOIN US!

It helps us to save on postage and printing costs if you can receive this newsletter by email, so please let us have your current email address.

The Ups and Downs of a Timber Bridge

We've gone beyond being able to celebrate that our town has one of only two remaining timber ramp bridges in the UK with a polygonal arch design.

The footbridge which once offered a short cut from Lea Road down to Dronfield Bottom is beyond any hope of repair or retention it seems. Deemed structurally unsafe, too costly to replace, its demolition is inevitable...but not just yet!

The Civic Society and FoDS (Friends of Dronfield Station) received an email from DCC which we circulated to members and FoDS to the Eye, stating the structure would be demolished in November. But at a meeting in October, Highways Director Julian Gould apologised for the inappropriate way this had been communicated.

In fact, the demolition has been 'paused' pending due process including a required planning application for its removal because it lies within the Conservation Area.

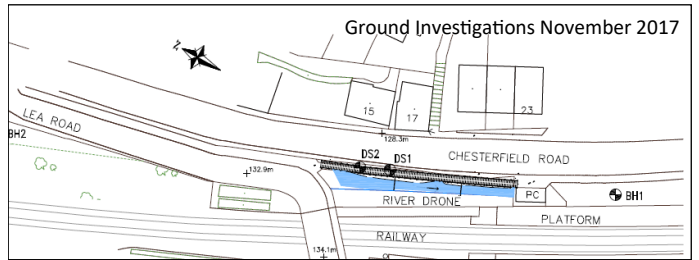
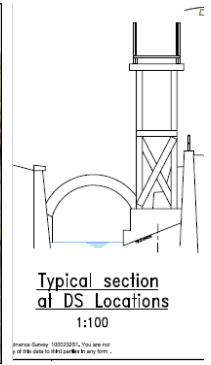
This does not provide any sort of renewed hope that it can be saved. It is just a formality in the grand scheme of things, but it has bought a bit of time for the Town Council, the rail operators, Highways, the school and the police to meet and thoroughly debate how safety on the station can be improved for the students who use the station bridge as their short cut.

Parents of students at Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School have for years raised concerns about how unsafe it is for groups of pupils to be on a platform where through trains approach from a bend at 80mph. The truth of the matter is that only those waiting for or alighting from a train should actually be on the station. (Possible exceptions being FoDS volunteers who maintain the waiting areas and planting and railway enthusiasts when a special steam engine passes through)

It is years since the timber ramp closed to the public and during that time human behaviour is such that the shortest route to and from school has been used rather than the official route which is along a narrow pavement to a pedestrian crossing to an equally narrow pavement on the other side where vehicles have to negotiate a sharp turn left onto Lea Road.

There is an acknowledgment that the behaviour of the students will be difficult to change and therefore we must find solutions to give safer passage to the continuing use of the station footbridge.

A number of options have been discussed, including making a new path where currently there is planting, directly through to the steps of the bridge so that students do not need to walk along the platform from the station entrance. Another suggestion is gated access, sections of fence with gates to access the trains, a ticket barrier or turnstile to only allow those with a ticket to access the station and an improvement of the official route from school for which there are proposals for improved safety at the crossing including a wider pavement at Lea Road. For many of these potential solutions there are reasons why they could not be implemented including cost, the difficulties of communicating the problems to the rail operators and the fact that Dronfield is only recognised as a small station where such railway infrastructure would be deemed unnecessary.



Today's very rough estimates put the cost of a new footbridge to replace the old one at £800,000 to a million pounds. Any Council funding would have to come from the Highway budget which as we know is stretched as it is attempting to maintain 3,500 miles of road in the county. It could not be justified to spend such a large percentage of that budget on one town. So what about crowdfunding? It has certainly been mentioned on social media.

Any new structure would need to be compliant with health and safety directives including the steepness of gradient a footbridge has to be. A new bridge could not simply replicate the old one. It would have to be longer, extending into the area where the old toilet block is and beyond.

Whatever happens in the next few months, we'll keep you posted and if you have any suggestions on how to improve the station in terms of safe passage for students, or how Lea Road could be improved, please get in touch using the address on the header.

You can also have your say by responding to the planning application when it appears on the NEDDC portal. A further meeting involving several agencies is taking place before Christmas and we'll keep you posted via Ripples.

Dronfield Civic Society Takes Part in the NPPF Consultation

It was a relatively short period of time of just 8 weeks to take part in this important consultation on the changes to the NPPF proposed by the new Labour Government. The timing of it was also not great in terms of most of the consultation being during the main holiday season and it was extremely lengthy with 106 questions.

But we felt we had to comment on some of the more important proposals such as housing targets and the concept of Green Belt. Perhaps the most important questions were about the reintroduction of mandatory targets aimed at delivering an increase in the number of homes built every year to rectify the so-called 'housing crisis'.

Whilst we recognise that not enough homes of the right sort in the right places are being built, we are totally opposed to the introduction of mandatory targets especially when areas like north east Derbyshire are given disproportionate targets compared to nearby urban areas like Sheffield. The truth is that the NEDDC housing target per annum will rise from 330 to 622 and because of this, the district council will move from a relatively strong position in being able to reject speculative development to a much weaker position overnight. Speculative rather than plan-led development will be more difficult to reject especially at Appeal.

The key to preventing speculative development is to have a Local Plan in place which NEDDC does have. It was adopted in 2021 covering years from 2014-2034, so is only half way through the time period. In March this year the Council published a 'Position Statement' to clarify its intentions not to progress formally with a full Review of the Local Plan. But then came a change of government and the proposed changes to the NPPF. Local Plans can take years to develop and bring to adoption, so in the light of the proposed changes to targets, work has had to begin on a review of the Local Plan beginning with scoping work and evidence gathering. To find enough land to satisfy the potential increase in housing targets, NEDDC has put out a 'call for sites'.

NEDDC Call for Sites

The Call for Sites engagement runs from 9th October 2024 to 10th January 2025.

During this time submissions of sites can be made for a range of uses including: residential development of five or more dwellings, self-build or custom build housing sites of one or more dwellings, biodiversity receptor sites with an area of 500sqm or more, retail development with a floor space of 500sqm or more, economic development e.g. office, factory, with a floor space of 500sqm or more, Gypsy, Travellers or Travelling Show people sites of 500sqm or more, public open space, community facilities and any other development.

This is an opportunity for developers who own land to offer sites across the district, including land within the Green Belt. The only way that Green Belt boundaries can be modified is through the Local Plan development process. It is therefore inevitable that those who bought Green Belt land at agricultural prices and land banked it, will seize the opportunity to have its Green Belt status removed to allow it to be allocated for development.

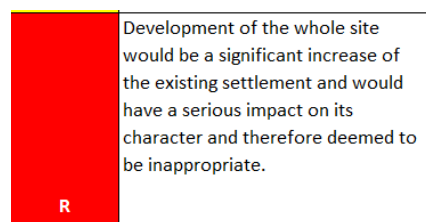
When land owners submit a site, it does not confer any form of consent or indicate that planning permission will be granted or suggest that the sites are suitable for allocating. The sites are collated on a Land Availability Assessment (LAA) document which grades them from Red to Green, indicating whether they are suitable or unsuitable for development. Whilst this may appear to be a sensible and transparent approach, the Land Availability Assessment does not carry weight as a material planning consideration.

A red score could mean the site is unlikely to be allocated in the Local Plan but the scoring does not prevent a landowner speculatively submitting an application for a red site.

Whilst NEDDC state clearly that the LAA scoring would not count as a material planning consideration, it is evident that Inspectors at Appeal do make reference to the LAA during their decision making deliberations including referring to it when other factors mean a site might be deemed unacceptable. (Appeal ref APP/R1038/W/24/3336365 Point 33).

This is an important point to note and one which occurred in Unstone when South Yorkshire Housing submitted an application for 38 houses on a field they purchased about ten years ago and offered up in the previous 'call for sites'.

The field was given a reference number and recorded on the LAA where it was assessed and given an overall red score meaning inappropriate for development. This was in part because it was Green Belt but also because of the difficulties of being able to provide safe access onto the B6057 and because of its unsustainable location. The site was not allocated in the Local Plan because of its red score but this speculative development was approved by the planning officers and the planning committee in December 2023 before being withdrawn for reasons we have alluded to in previous newsletters.



Development of the whole site would be a significant increase of the existing settlement and would have a serious impact on its character and therefore deemed to be inappropriate.

Policy Conclusion on the Unstone site in the Land Availability Assessment

This case is a useful illustration of how land offered in the call for sites, despite a red score, could still be approved for housing development.

It is highly likely the call for sites now will see a return of sites submitted last time, including land in the Green Belt owned by developers. With a target of 622 homes per annum, it will be extremely challenging for NEDDC to find enough housing land and it will mean that land in the Green Belt surrounding Dronfield will be at high risk of losing its protected status.

Civic Voice Responds to House of Lords Grey Belt Inquiry

The recent consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced the concept of Grey Belt, though without a precise definition, as a means of providing additional sites for development to meet the so-called housing crisis.

This imprecise definition defines ‘grey belt’ as land within the Green Belt that includes previously developed areas and those that contribute only a little to the green belt’s purposes. It excludes land with significant environmental importance.

The concern is who or what would decide what is Grey within the Green? We hope it would be not left to a speculative developer, but rather the local planning authority, during plan-making, perhaps by means of a Grey Belt Register.

Civic Voice stressed the essential role of local plans and local authorities in guiding responsible development on Grey Belt land, ensuring that housing needs are met without undermining the integrity and core-purposes of the Green Belt.

Ian Harvey, Executive Director of Civic Voice said, *“If we need a national conversation about the Green Belt, let’s have that and ensure it is a genuinely meaningful national discussion. However we should not undermine the Green Belt with piecemeal applications or unclear national policies before that conversation takes place.*

Our message to the Government and local councils is clear— local plans must remain at the heart of decision-making. Local authorities need the resources to engage meaningfully with communities and all authorities must prioritise getting local plans in place so that we can address the affordability crisis.”

Dronfield Civic Society very much agrees with the position taken by Civic Voice on the introduction of the Grey Belt concept.

Key Recommendations:

Civic Voice asserts that local authorities are best placed to assess the suitability of land for development and to ensure that housing targets are met in a way that aligns with local infrastructure, environmental priorities and community needs. Development decisions must be plan-led and responsive to the unique challenges and opportunities within each locality.

Civic Voice calls on the Government to implement a clear and enforceable definition of Grey Belt, warning that ambiguity could lead to speculative land degradation. Ensuring land reclassification is based on objective criteria is crucial for upholding the principles of sustainable development.

The response advocates for greater collaboration between local authorities, particularly where Grey Belt land crosses boundaries, calling for the reinstatement of sub-regional planning frameworks to support cohesive, joined-up decision-making across local areas.

Civic Voice also stressed the risks of prioritising Grey Belt sites for development over more suitable Green Belt areas warning that development must consider a range of factors such as transport links, accessibility and local services ensuring that the most appropriate sites are chosen for sustainable growth.

Civic Voice calls for a balanced approach to Grey Belt development, ensuring that new housing is supported by essential infrastructure such as public transport, schools, healthcare facilities and green spaces. Without these provisions, new developments risk being unsustainable and disconnected from existing communities.

NED Local Plan 2024-2044 Timetable Approved

APPENDIX A: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME PROGRAMME

North East Derbyshire Local Plan (2024 - 2034)

2024				2025												2026											
N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
						C	C												C	C					S		

2027												2028												
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M								
					H	H											I							A

Examination timings are indicative only

KEY:

Plan Preparation (incl. evidence collection and Issues & Options) (Reg. 18)	Examination (Reg. 24)
Issues and Options Consultation (Reg. 18)	Hearings (April/May 2027)
Publication Consultation (Reg. 19)	Receipt of Inspector’s Report (Reg. 25) February 2028
Submission (Reg. 22)	Adoption (Reg. 26) May 2028

Planning regulations require Local Planning Authorities to review their Local Plans at least once every 5 years to ensure that policies remain relevant and address the needs of their districts.

The NEDLP was adopted in 2021 based on the 2012 version of the NPPF. A scoping exercise, already undertaken, has indicated that a number of strategic policies need to be updated including the supply of housing and employment land and new policy areas around biodiversity net gain and climate change.

The Plan-making process has already begun with evidence gathering including ‘Call for Sites’. Next year there will be a 6-week consultation period in June/July 2025 with the possibility of further periods of consultation.

Knowing how long it took to bring the 2014-2034 Local Plan to adoption means it is encouraging to see a start being made by NEDDC on a revised plan for the district. Much will hinge on whether some of the proposals in the NPPF consultation are formally adopted including the all important housing targets which at the time of writing remain an unknown. It will be a huge ask for a district to have to build 622 houses per annum compared to 330 currently. You can be sure we will be keeping a watchful eye on what transpires.

The Council will submit the new Local Plan 2024-2044, together with a Sustainability Appraisal and other documentation to the Secretary of State by the end of November 2026. An examination of it by an independent planning inspector will test its soundness against statutory requirements. Representations will be considered by the Inspector either through written submission or during formal public hearing sessions. The timetable for what has been described has now been approved.

Backlash from Councils Over Housing Targets

A recent BBC news item suggests there has been a backlash by councils in England over the proposed re-introduction of mandatory housing targets. The government's flagship policy to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years is seen by many as unrealistic and impossible to achieve.

We are still waiting for the government's response to the consultation which we took part in (see page 3) which according to a FOI request shows 90% of responders raised concerns across the 317 Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat councils. Many fear the algorithm used to calculate the targets has not taken into account the pressure on local infrastructure, land shortages and a lack of capacity in both the planning system and the construction industry.

The change in the methodology has led to claims that the new targets will not match housing need and sensible house building plans should not be based on numbers alone. It has to be about building the right homes in the right places.

We very much hope that with the strength of feeling expressed about the mandatory targets that the government will rethink this policy and allow local councils to decide where houses are built, how many and what type they are by consultation with Town and Parish councils, civic societies and local residents.

Dronfield Wastewater Treatment Works

When Yorkshire Water submitted their planning application to DCC for statutory works within the compound itself, they also applied for a new access through the Green Belt as part of that application.

We were of the opinion that the two things should form two separate applications and we questioned whether the strategy was once again an attempt to acquire the access knowing that approval would have to be given for the statutory works.

Probably our assumption was right because many months later a planning application was submitted just for the work in the compound which recently secured planning approval despite the fact that much of the work had already been completed.

Then came an application which is out to consultation at the time of writing, just for the access road. A letter received by residents from Yorkshire Water suggested there will be no decision before January 2025. The letter also indicated that all the equipment has been installed, chemical delivery is awaited and testing of the plant which will remove phosphorous before the water is returned to the river, will follow. All the statutory works seemingly have been achieved without the need for the access.

We have written to both NEDDC and to DCC planning department to request that our previous comments are taken into account. We feel there is no justified reason for the construction of the access through the Green Belt, particularly when Half Acre Lane continues to be used by Yorkshire Water.

NEDDC objected to the application under delegated powers. Officers concluded that the proposals would have a negative impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst the district council accepted a temporary construction, the permanent road would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and unacceptably harm its openness. The scheme would be contrary to Local Plan Policy SS10 and the policies of the NPPF.

The county council has received some strongly worded comments about the application summarised as follows:

If YW can continue to be sensible by deploying suitable vehicles, then a new access road is not essential. The Half Acre Lane route works for all ongoing daily activities and there is no valid reason why this must be changed and no bridge strike has ever been reported to Network Rail.

Here at this long-established sewage works, YW must realise there is an important need to be understanding and respectful of the local rural limitations and local people. Standardised operations using very large vehicles are not possible. Currently a full range of vehicles are using Half Acre Lane and there is no valid reason why this must be changed.

I believe YW has an unfounded desire for this roadway through the Green Belt. It is not essential to operating the sewage works and should be refused.

Your Civic Society will bring you the outcome of this long-running saga in the New Year.

BESS at Dyche Lane goes to Appeal

You may remember from previous newsletters that an application was submitted to NEDDC earlier in the year for a Battery Energy Storage System on the narrowest section of Green Belt between Dronfield and Sheffield. The application was refused but the applicant has taken the decision to Appeal. The Appeal will be by Hearing, although written submissions can be made to NEDDC up to the closing date of 23rd December and we would urge you to make your views known to demonstrate the strength of feeling to the inspector. The Hearing is scheduled for at 10:00 on 27th February 2025 with a site visit arranged for a separate date.

This is an entirely inappropriate location for the facility where functionality of the Green Belt is the highest in the district. The council is opposing the BESS on grounds of:

- a) unacceptable encroachment into the countryside which would erode the visual and spatial openness of the Green Belt*
- b) the site is located within a primary Area of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity (AMES) and would harm the character, quality and distinctiveness of the area*
- c) insufficient information to fully assess flood risk impacts.*

If you wish to comment for the Appeal, the NEDDC reference number is 24/00035/FL.

Local Planning Application Monitoring

Did you know that NEDDC produces a list of planning applications which have been submitted or approved on a weekly basis? You can search for applications in specific areas of the district and you can look in more detail at applications by using the reference numbers on the applications.

A Committee Member monitors the weekly planning applications and it is sometimes useful to look at applications or decisions in the wider area of the district as well as in our town.

Applications in the town are discussed at our monthly meetings where we agree to either write to object or support an application. Sometimes we don't all agree and in that case, we may submit a comment giving the pros and cons of an application. We also monitor applications where we have chosen not to comment and review how a planning officer may have made their decision. We also flag up enforcement issues where we have observed breaches of planning conditions.

Often it is simply an observation task to take a look at what is happening along the High Street and Dronfield Bottom as business premises change hands, introduce new shop fronts and alter advertising signage. Sometimes changes are made without the required planning permission, perhaps because business owners were unaware of what may be appropriate. Advice and information can be gleaned about what is acceptable or otherwise from comments made on applications by the Conservation Officer.

One of our concerns is how planning conditions are monitored. For example where permission was granted on condition that a parking area had to be kept clear or where a condition allowed a certain time for the removal of something in a retrospective application. We have recently sought advice about these aspects from the Assistant Director of Planning at NEDDC.

We do give credit where it is due and in this update of recent local planning applications, we have supported the proposals for what we see as an improvement to the shop front at Banner Jones solicitors. We also supported the change of use of vacant commercial premises on High Street for conversion to residential units and we were pleased to note the detailed reasoning by a planning officer for refusal of an application in Coal Aston.

So here's a round up of some of the planning applications we have discussed, supported and brought to the attention of the LA.

24/00824/AD | Application for advertisement consent for a 55 inch outdoor freestanding illuminated digital sign for promoting the sports centre and Dronfield (Adjacent to Conservation Area)



We decided not to comment on this one. Whilst potentially helping to promote activities at the Sports Centre and perhaps the town itself, we felt this type of signage would be visually noisy and urbanising. The recent work at the Civic Centre, including changes to planting areas is an attempt to soften the large area of tarmac, so the introduction of this type of signage, in our view, may not be entirely appropriate in achieving those aims.

24/00820/FL | Conservation Area Consent to Re-paint existing hardwood windows and replace current glass with double glazing, replace existing sign box, change outside paint colour of building from black to RAL7016 (grey) (Conservation Area) (Affecting setting of a Listed Building)



We supported this application as we considered there would be an improvement in the local street scene through the retention of traditional elements of the shop front within the host building. Too often older shop fronts are removed and replaced using modern materials which are inappropriate for their location within the Conservation Area. This scheme retains and improves the traditional elements in a contemporary way.

24/00569/FL Change of use of existing offices and yoga studio to 3 residential apartments 2-10 High Street

We supported this application which would increase the number of small residential units in a highly sustainable location. Whilst we recognise that there would be no parking provision for the apartments, we agree with the local Highway Authority that this is not problematic due to the town centre location and nearby access to public transport.

24/00541/FL | Conversion of the adjacent vacant unit (the carpeteer) into an extended seating area / flexible space and change of use, and creation of an outdoor seating area (Conservation Area) (Amended plans)

We supported this application at The Underdog to make use of the vacant adjacent premises and to provide an outdoor area. We were pleased to note the application received conditional approval on October 7th.

24/00647/FLH 27 Cross Lane Coal Aston a CA application for a 4-bay garage with plant room and garden store with solar panels.

Committee did look at this application because it was in the conservation area of Coal Aston. Our discussions raised similar concerns to those of the planning officer who recommended refusal of the scheme. It was judged to be unacceptable by reason of its location, scale and massing as it would result in an overbearing and overshadowing impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. It was thought to be a poor response to the setting of the site, failing to respect the form, scale, size and massing of nearby buildings, proposing inappropriate and uncharacteristic materials and it would fail to preserve or enhance the conservation area.

24/00789/FL | Proposal to resurface the garden path to block paving (Conservation Area/Listed Building).

We decided not to comment on this application at Hall Barn although we did discuss whether the block paving would be less safe in wet weather and under leaf fall than the current surface.

Society Receives Bequest to Benefit Coal Aston

Earlier this year, the Civic Society received a bequest of £10,000 from Mr and Mrs G.M. Rodgers, formerly life members, of The Beeches Coal Aston. The bequest was to be used for the benefit of Coal Aston to include bulb planting and a plaque in memory of the Rodgers.

This was quite a large sum of money which we felt could include much more than bulbs and a plaque, so we made an approach to the Coal Aston Village Hall Gardeners as committee member Martin Hanrahan was aware of ongoing projects being undertaken by the group in the area around the hall.

Chair Bernard Caddy met with the two leaders of the group Mary Gray and Vivien Hobson who have taken advice from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Work to clear beds, replant and create a wildflower meadow has begun using funds from the Coal Aston gala and a Community Action Grant which the group secured from DCC. The group has plans to do much more when funds allow.

Having seen the plans and the work already done, we felt that this work would satisfy the wording of the bequest. So far we have committed £2000 to the group to assist with future planned work which includes: a wildlife pond with suitable safety cover, a community orchard area, a bench seat with a plaque to recognise the bequest from the Rodgers and appropriate bulb planting both along the bank of the access road at the side of the hall and in other parts of the village.

Such a large sum of money does not preclude other ways to improve Coal Aston so we put a call out for suggestions via the Ripples e-newsletter.

Member and long-time resident of Coal Aston, David Hallam, responded with a suggestion to create a visual entrance to Coal Aston on Eckington Road where the speed limit reduces, using the well-used concept of highway 'gateways'.

Gates seen at the entrance to some villages including Hope near Castleton were a traditional means of preventing animal movements in more rural areas. Today they are sometimes used as a visual cue to slow traffic by creating an entrance to a 30mph area or depending on their position, a suggestion to the driver of a narrowing of the road. Many 'gateways' are accompanied by signage or planting/planters as can be seen from the images.

We very much welcomed David's suggestion, although we thought it may be a lengthy process in terms of permissions from the Highway Authority. Our contact at DCC, Cllr Charlotte Cupit, provided advice about how to proceed while stating that she was a big fan of village gateways including those at Hope which provided a traditional aesthetic with impact.

Cllr Cupit in her position as Cabinet Member for DCC Highways Assets and Transport, stated that the Highway Authority would be happy to work with us to agree a safe location, appropriate materials and signage for the Coal Aston Gateway. The recommendation in terms of materials is for wood effect resin which requires little maintenance and which is often used when older wooden street furniture is replaced.

From a formal perspective, the Society would need an 'objects in the highway' licence from DCC which would cost £100 in agreement with the Town Council.

We will provide further updates about how the very generous bequest from Mr and Mrs Rodgers is being spent in future issues of the newsletter and Ripples.



The Civic Society has already planted many bulbs on roadside verges in Coal Aston and elsewhere in Dronfield. The Coal Aston Village Hall Gardeners are keen to identify other areas in Coal Aston that would benefit from bulb planting, so let us know if you have any suggestions.

A highway gateway is a visual indicator to drivers that they are entering a special area or a speed restricted zone. They can also be used to indicate the presence of traffic calming works, such as road humps. Gateways are often seen with accompanying planting and signage.



Google images rural village gateways and highway gateways

Retail Pods—Popping Up Everywhere

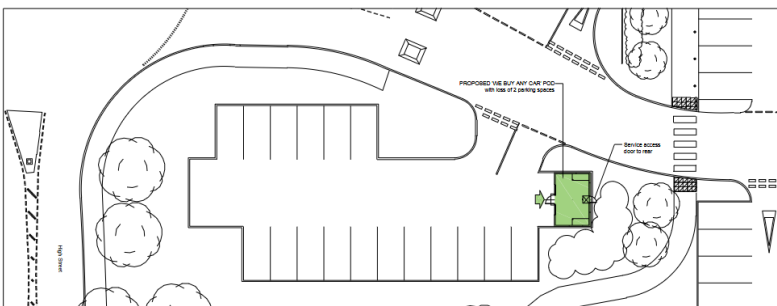


Might one lead to another? We'd like your views on the topic of retail pods, so drop us a line at the address on the header.

One of the applications among the weekly listings that caught our eye is for a retail pod for Webuyanycar to be positioned within the small south west car park on the right as you enter Sainsbury's parking area. These pods are appearing in the car parks of supermarkets across the district.

Whilst the loss of two car parking spaces is unlikely to be a problem and we are keen to support economic improvement in the town, it cannot be at the expense of a detrimental visual impact on the existing qualities of the built and natural environment. In this case, the location of the pod is not ideal.

The chosen location is clearly for maximum visibility, but in our view it will be sited too close to the historic centre of the town where listed buildings predominate including Hall Barn and its beautiful garden space. Perhaps more importantly, it is in an area used by pedestrians coming from the town centre to access both the store and Hall Barn.



As well as, in our view, the quite garish colour scheme of the pod, it comes with a vast amount of signage including 1 front fascia, 3 rear and side fascia signs, 2 front panel signs, 2 graphic signs on the front glazing, 1 graphic sign on the front elevation, 2 panel signs on the side elevations and 1 panel sign on the rear elevation of the pod.

In other words you won't be able to miss it easily.

There is a large car park around the store with areas that could more appropriately accommodate the pod such as where the recycling bins used to be or in the northerly area closer to the store itself, further away from regular pedestrian traffic and less visible in terms of the Conservation Area. For these reasons we cannot support the application and ask the applicant to reconsider the location within the rest of the car park.



An Invitation to Renew Your Membership in April 2025

From April 1st, Dronfield Civic Society invites you to renew your membership. Annual subscription charges are **£10.00 singles**, **£15.00 couples/families** and £25.00 for small businesses/schools and associations.

Membership Secretary is Josephine Wright who will be pleased to receive the slip below with your payment by cheque to:

Dronfield Civic Society

Please send to: Mrs J Wright DCS Membership Secretary 11 Moorgate Crescent, Dronfield S18 1YF

For any membership queries you can contact Jo on dcsmembership@gmail.com

Please change your Standing Order to the current rates if you have not already done so. Life membership remains at £60.00 single and £100.00 joint. Small business/school/association remains at £25.00.

Did you know you can now pay by BACS? Our sort code is 60-40-09 and account number 09430342.



Please renew my membership of Dronfield Civic Society from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Membership: (please circle) Single Couple/Family Business/School/Association

I enclose a cheque made payable to Dronfield Civic Society for £.....

*Members receive reduced price entry to DCS talks and either a quarterly e-newsletter or a printed copy.
PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS AS IT SAVES THE COST OF POSTAGE AND PRINTING*



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With thanks to John Morris of Stauff for supporting Dronfield Civic Society