

Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society

"Rus In Urbe"

Patron: Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Heath K.G. M.B.E. M.P.
Chairman: Sir Robin Ibbs K.B.E.
Secretary: Mrs Alison Pinkerton O.B.E.

BULLETIN NUMBER 18

Since the last circulation to members, when the Bulletin was in the form of the Minutes of the 1999 Annual General Meeting of the Society and a covering letter from the Chairman, several matters have arisen which are noted below.

We start by recording with sadness the recent death of John Hardiman who from the Society's inception had been its Vice Chairman. In his commitment to its objectives he made major contributions to its work, and particularly to practical proposals for the management of traffic in the Close. The Society is most grateful to his family for their generous decision that donations in his memory should be made to the Society.

Traffic Surveys

Some members will have taken part and others will have noted that there have been several traffic surveys undertaken by the Society in recent months. These are carried out on behalf of the Dean and Chapter and include counts of parked cars in the Close. The aim of these surveys has been to measure how successfully the objectives of the Cathedral Close Traffic Management Working party were being met through the undertakings included in the S106 agreement on which planning permission, for three years, for a car park at the southern end of the Close was based.

These objectives are:

- To stop through traffic using the Close
- To reduce parking in the Close
- To reduce the number of cars entering the Close

The Society's Traffic Working Party has prepared an interim report for the Dean and Chapter based on the results of previous surveys and those undertaken in 1999. There appears to be an overall reduction in the number of vehicles entering the Close but the volume of school traffic at peak periods continues to be a problem. Surveys to be undertaken in 2000 will also focus on the use of the Close as a "rat run" in the evenings which will then allow a final report to be prepared.

The Chairman and Committee would like to thank all those members who have helped undertake the surveys. They have had to withstand cold and wet weather and at times mild abuse. Thanks also to the Close Constables and the Parking Attendants who have been very helpful.

Schools Traffic

It is understood that there are on-going discussions continuing between the Dean and Chapter, the schools and the District Council to look for solutions to the problem of school traffic. One change that has made a considerable difference is the opening of the Queen's Gate for Cathedral School parents at peak periods in the morning and afternoon.

Parking in the Close

The parking surveys have shown an overall reduction in the number of parked cars. The number of parking season ticket holders has increased but there has been a reduction in the number of cars parked by day visitors.

Very recently parking has been prevented in the Broad Walk, in accordance with the temporary planning agreement to allow parking on the former tennis courts. The improvement in the appearance of this area is pleasing and will further benefit when the West Front working area is cleared. It is understood that the Dean and Chapter intend to improve the landscape along the Broad Walk in due course.

Dragons Teeth

Since the installation of the "dragons teeth" last July few cars have entered the Close through the Harnham Gate. Incredibly, residents are still witnessing occasional cars driving, or trying to drive, through the Gate from De Vaux Place despite the obstruction! However the recent installation of a County Council traffic notice at the junction of De Vaux Place with St Nicholas Road may help to deter such drivers. This notice was erected in response to a plea from the Society. There is no doubt that the "dragons teeth" also slow the cars leaving the Close thus making the Harnham Gate much safer for pedestrians. Members will recollect that the Society contributed about £3000, around half the cost, to the installation of the "dragons teeth".

Widening of the western pavement of the approach from the Close to the High Street Gate

This modification seems to be an unqualified success and makes the route less hazardous for pedestrians.

Traffic Calming

New traffic calming devices have recently been installed in the Close roads, again in accordance with the S106 agreement. These look more in keeping than did the previous black rubber covered "humps". Sadly they apparently blended too well with the appearance of the road and there have been complaints to the Dean and Chapter that pedestrians have fallen over them. As a result each block of sets has been highlighted by white lines and a reminder of the 10 mile an hour speed restriction in the Close

The car park at the southern end of the Close

During the coming year the Dean and Chapter will need to decide what action to take when the temporary planning permission for this car park runs out. Should they apply for renewal, and if so should the application be for extended temporary use or should it become permanent? Your Committee has considered these questions. We believe that, although ideally there should not be a car park at the rural and tranquil southern end of the Close, the use of the former tennis courts in this way has brought significant benefits elsewhere; in particular on the eastern side of Choristers green and on the Broad Walk. At the moment closure of this car park is not a practical proposition as the effect would be chaotic. On the other hand, there are many possible changes in the traffic situation in the Close (and elsewhere in Salisbury) in the next few years. In particular it is possible that the city park and ride scheme, and the Magna Carta centre, referred to below, may fundamentally alter the situation so that the present car park would no longer be needed. This could be a valuable improvement for the Close.

In view of all these points we believe that the Society should **not** oppose renewal of **temporary** permission for the car park but that it should **stand out against permanent** permission being granted. Discussions with the Chapter Clerk have indicated that, on similar reasoning, the Dean and Chapter may take the same view and decide that renewed temporary permission is what their preferred option. The question of planning permission for the car park is one on which the Committee hope to hear the views of members at the Society's Annual General Meeting.

The Magna Carta

Salisbury's copy of the Magna Carta, at present housed in the Chapter House, is a major attraction that brings visitors to Salisbury. As many of you will know, the Dean and Chapter have announced a major new project that would create a new Centre which would enable Magna Carta to be displayed to full advantage, and also provide first class facilities for the many visitors who come to the Cathedral and the Close. Planning is still at an early stage but one possibility is that the Cathedral Works Department might be moved out of the Close and so release ample land for the new centre. This would also provide space for a new car park in a more convenient position than the one at the southern end of the Close. If this concept of the new centre comes to fruition it will be by far the biggest change seen in the Close in modern times. Your Chairman believes that as plans are revealed the Society should actively seek some way in which it can make a positive and significant contribution to the project. Obviously this is a subject on which we shall be keeping members informed.

Flood Alleviation

The Society has been informed by the Environment Agency that studies are being made of the vulnerability of Salisbury to flooding and to identify feasible flood defence options. A ground investigation is to be carried out and we understand from the Chapter Clerk that this will involve 2 bore holes being driven in the Marsh Close. Options for action are unlikely to be finalised until the Spring at the earliest when we expect to be included in any consultation.

Landscape Working Party

We continue to be represented on this Working Party which has now completed its review and recommendations for the planting of trees in the churchyard, Choristers Green, the Marsh and Rack Closes, where hedges have also been of concern. The lime trees on Choristers Green pollarded last year, which had to be undertaken as a number of the trees were thought to have otherwise been at risk, should produce a more acceptable profile this year as they come into leaf.

The Working Party is now anxious to discuss with householders their plans for tree planting as of course a number of gardens in the Close provide the backdrop to its appearance.

The Society Lecture 2000

Plans are going ahead for the annual lecture to take place in October. We expect to be able to announce the speaker and title at the Annual General Meeting.

Planning Applications

The applications for developments in the Close are monitored and when necessary objections are made or comments put forward. Currently there are no planning applications pending which your Committee consider call for action by the Society.

Annual General Meeting Monday June 19th 2000 at 6.00pm

Please remember to put this date in your diary. The AGM is one of the few occasions in the year when members can meet together and enjoy a social gathering as well as hearing the latest views of their Committee and having a chance to express their own. This year it will provide an opportunity to discuss the question of renewal of the planning permission for the car park at the southern end of the Close, and also to consider the proposed Magna Carta Centre.

March 2000

