

Passionate and active guardian of heritage

I RECENTLY met with a group of members of The Horsham Society. Readers will be familiar with the society if only by their regular and thought-provoking contributions to this page of articles and letters. What are they really about, though, and what do they get up to?

As it makes clear on its website, The Horsham Society, which was founded way back in 1955, was created to 'watch over the interests of the town, to guard its heritage, to promote good planning and design and to speak up when it believes decisions detrimental to Horsham are being considered'.

As part of this, the society meets and is in regular touch with, for example, Robert Nye, leader of Horsham



Francis' Footnote

by Francis Maude

District Council, and Tom Crowley, its chief executive.

As Member of Parliament for the town, I am proud to be a vice-president of the society and our recent meeting was an opportunity to catch up on what the society has been up to and also to discuss issues affecting Horsham.

Unsurprisingly, housing development was high on the members' agenda, as was the coalition Government's localism agenda. They were keen to know how we envisage organisations such as The Horsham Society getting involved in planning

matters.

Although discussion was lively and productive, I promised specific briefings on a number of issues from my colleague, Eric Pickles, the Communities and Local Government Secretary. It's so helpful to have an exchange of ideas and thoughts.

The society's website gives a lot more detail as to their activities and is a fantastic resource for anyone interested in Horsham past and present. One of the first pages you encounter reveals a fascinating history of Horsham, going right back to when it was nothing but a small Saxon settlement. Did you know that Horsham is a Saxon word, meaning 'a place of horses' or 'a horse settlement'?

There's a summary of issues that the society are

currently involved with, such as the controversial future of the Shelley Fountain and the town hall and even a handy section on walks in Horsham – ideal for those seeking inspiration on a forthcoming summer's day.

To gain the full benefit of The Horsham Society it's a very good idea to join as a fully-fledged member. More information can be found on the website: www.horshamsociety.org, by calling 01403 263870 or by emailing: chairman@horshamsociety.org.

I hope this article inspires some readers to explore membership of The Horsham Society – it's a true Horsham institution with a passionate and active membership.

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MP for Horsham