

# Keeping up appearances in a recession



by **John Steele**  
of the  
Horsham  
Society

AS THE recession continues to take its toll in the High Street and shops are left empty it is all the more important to keep up the appearance of our street scene as best we can.

We have all seen examples of what can happen to towns which let their environment deteriorate and lose faith in themselves.

Provided we continue to maintain our infrastructure and optimism for the future of our

town, once the recession eases our economy will bounce back. Let's hope last week's good news that Ceres Power is to establish a new factory in Foundry Lane is just the start.

I am looking forward to seeing what Horsham in Bloom has in store for us this summer to help lift our spirits.

The council must ensure that standards are maintained in street repairs and urban landscaping. I find it amazing that it has allowed the repairs to the surface in The Forum to be completed in such a shoddy way.

Instead of replacing the paving properly whole sections have been left with a bare concrete finish. It is reminiscent of austerity era make do and mend, and certainly not what we expect in

one of our important town centre areas.

Whilst we are close to Sainsbury's, when are they going to repair the surface of the car park which is an eyesore worthy of a down at heel supermarket in a third world country?

While they are at it they might also replace the dead trees and tidy up the shrubbery alongside the path running down the side of the store to the river.

When Sainsbury's developed this key area it entered into a moral contract with residents to keep the site maintained to the original high standard required to get planning consent. It has failed to do so and is letting the town down.

And what is happening to the Shelley fountain? Work

started in early January to rectify long standing problems and a Horsham council news release said it would be working again by the end of the month.

After nearly three months the globe still sits forlornly on a steel trestle surrounded by temporary fencing. Whether one loves or hates the sculpture, nobody wants to see this sorry mess. It is time the council explained what is going on and when it will be back in working order.

Finally, what about the new seats in Swan Walk shopping centre? I have heard nothing but complaints about them so I went to try them out myself. They are stylish and must have cost a lot of money but they are probably the most uncomfortable public seats in

Horsham.

Furthermore, the lack of backrests or arms make it extremely difficult for older citizens to get up and down. The problem is aggravated by the seats also being very low, particularly where placed on a slope.

Perhaps they have been designed to discourage shoppers from lingering too long. I hope it doesn't deter them altogether.

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the town's past, present and future and seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. For more information and details on how to join visit our website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 272814.*