

# Taming the A-boards, but without the support of businesses

WHAT a pleasure it was to walk down Horsham's Middle Street and West Street without having to manoeuvre my way through a sea of A-boards.

For far too long these have been the curse of Horsham, a danger and inconvenience to pedestrians and often an eyesore. Some businesses displayed a number of boards of various sizes, some a long way from their premises, without regard for public safety or the detrimental visual impact on our historic centre.

The Horsham Society has been pressing for action to curb this menace for years so West Sussex and Horsham councils are to



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be congratulated for finally introducing a licensing scheme for a six month trial. This allows authorised businesses to display a single A-board adjacent to and within one metre of their premises.

But what a pity that the business community ignored our pleas for a voluntary code of practice. Instead, in order to bring order to the chaos, the public must meet the cost of the licensing

scheme through our council tax.

Businesses frequently complain they are unfairly treated and subject to too much bureaucracy but this scheme was essential in order to curb the excesses of a relatively small number of inconsiderate and irresponsible traders.

Now you don't have to keep your eyes peeled to avoid obstructions next time you walk down West Street take a moment to look up at the interesting mix of buildings and decoration.

The eastern half is within the central conservation area and well worth your attention. The pargetting (decorative plasterwork)

above Toni&Guy at number 58 is particularly unusual.

The East Street paving works are moving ahead slowly. Although it will still be many weeks before we see the final result, the new surface looks promising, as does the new sign proclaiming it to be a pedestrian zone.

We must make sure that pedestrians exercise their priority and reclaim this attractive street from the curse of through traffic and parking.

With all the new eating places opening in the town people are wondering what has become of the plans for a new Bill's restaurant in Horsham Town Hall. A

recent planning application for new signs hopefully suggests that this long saga is finally coming to an end.

Whatever one might have thought about the plan to turn the town hall into a restaurant the sooner the building is brought back into use the better.

In a similar vein, another set of planning applications for part of the King's Head Hotel might also see the end of this sad and long running story.

The old building deserves better than to stand empty as it has now for many years.

Many newcomers to the town will never have known it as a popular hotel, still less the location of many

meetings and events in the town's history.

New life in the town hall and the King's Head will encourage pedestrian traffic and help reinforce the link between East Street and Carfax.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.

Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website [www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 263870.