

To build the future we must understand our past

WHEN I was talking to someone the other day, I mentioned that I belonged to the Horsham Society and it was clear from the person's response that they thought that I belonged to a group of old people, whose sole interest was in the history of the town.

Nothing could be further from the truth, though it took me some time to explain what are the objectives of the society. Mind you, this conversation did drive home to me how easy it is for the aims and objectives of any local group to be misunderstood.

One has to wonder how the majority of the people



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of Horsham perceive the society. For this reason, it's worth trying to identify its aims and objectives with some simple examples of work currently in progress.

The Horsham Society is interested in the past, present and future of Horsham. An understanding of the past is obviously of importance as it determined our present. We applaud our

successes or are haunted by our failures.

This might relate to changes to existing buildings, the construction of new buildings, the park, road signage, car parking, hospital services, etc; the list is endless. Similarly, an understanding of the present can help to determine our future.

If we can look at what we have, keep the best bits and ensure that whatever changes we make in the future are in the best interests of the town, we stand a chance of developing a town in which we want to live in years to come.

So let's look at some

examples from the society's work in progress.

As far as the past is concerned, you may have heard of the Local List.

This is a list of buildings that may have no national importance, such as a listed building, but are of importance for their local historical or architectural interest. We, the residents of Horsham, can have some influence in this process.

With respect to the present, one only has to look at the current and ongoing work in The Forum in Horsham to realise how continued vigilance by the society can be beneficial to the community by helping to

ensure a satisfactory result.

When we start to look at the future, the scenario is frightening even though the opportunities are enormous.

We can be sure that there will continue to be pressure to build more houses, for example.

Where will they be built and what will they look like? Will the park survive into our future or will it slowly be eroded away? Will people want to live in or visit our town?

If we can get the changes that are bound to occur right most of the time, we shall continue to have a town in which most of us want to live. If we get it wrong, the

future will be a nightmare.

Hopefully, more people will realise that the Horsham Society is interested in more than just the past and so help to define the future for all of us.

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 or telephone 01403 263870.