

David Moore: where do we go after West Street renovation?



see in front of you the defunct Shelley Fountain.

As you move into Bishopric, you enter an area with quite simple but attractive water features before you come to the green screen, which blocks the view of Albion Way and its busy junction with the Guildford Road.

The screen also has the additional advantage that it provides some acoustic insulation for the people using West Street and this part of Bishopric.

Once you step around the screen you face the nightmare of crossing Albion Way, a most unattractive proposition.

By no stretch of the imagination would you call Albion Way an attractive sight so it's far better that it's hidden from view.

However, that's today's scenario and we need to look forward to tomorrow as there's a continuing need to improve the appearance of the town.

It will need to change to meet the demands of the modern world but at the same time it needs to retain its market town feel.

Up to now, most change has been managed quite successfully.

So let's assume that the West Street project has been finished, a sensible, safe and effective way for people to cross Albion Way has been found and a new Waitrose store has been built on the Lifestyle Ford site.

What happens now to the part of Bishopric between West Street and Albion Way?

The first thing that has to

be addressed is the Shelley Fountain.

At one time, whether one liked it or not, it was a visitor attraction and it even appeared as part of the introduction to South Today.

All that's in the past.

Today, it's just a stationary hulk with its arms depleted of their revolving globes and surrounded by totally empty, save for rubbish, planters (presented to the town by Horsham in Bloom and the Horsham Society).

In short, it no longer has any attractive features to commend it.

It needs to be replaced by an appropriate piece of architecture, preferably still a water feature, which people will find attractive.

Then someone needs to

decide what to do about the area between what is currently the Shelley Fountain and Albion Way and this is where Horsham District Council will have an important role to play.

There has been concern about anti-social behavior in and around this area, especially in the evening.

The big risk is that there is an overreaction to this problem. Instead of tackling it, one suggestion might be to effectively gut this part of Bishopric.

Why not remove the water features, the seating and the green screen and open the area up to view?

It all sounds very simple but is it right? Why should we let what is during the day an attractive area be destroyed?

Why should we open up

to view for shoppers in West Street the steady stream of traffic along Albion Way? Why should we put up with the additional traffic noise that would be experienced?

It wouldn't make sense. We have to protect and improve what we've got on this area not destroy it.

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 261640.

The work concerning the refurbishment of West Street in Horsham is now well underway and it won't be too long before the end product is revealed. People will then be able to form their own view as to the success of the project, in particular has it improved the appearance of the street.

As you walk down West Street from Middle Street, you