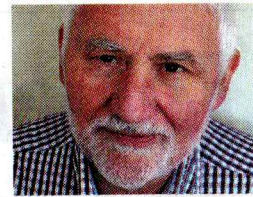


Horsham Society

with Malcolm Willis



Who can make our good town better?

Horsham town centre is in the process of undergoing significant change. The centre of the town appears to have shifted with the redevelopment of Bishops Weald and the arrival of John Lewis.

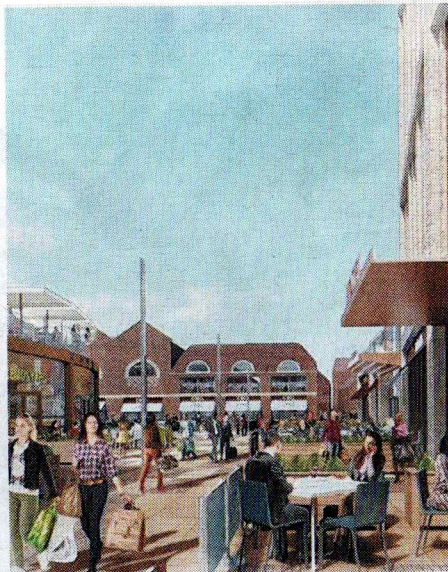
This will change with the regeneration of Piries Place, including a hotel and an Everyman cinema. Further alterations to Swan Walk, with a multi-screen cinema and more restaurants, will add to this significant investment in our town centre.

Will these changes make our good town even better? Are we at the mercy of the planners, or can we all make a difference?

It is generally recognised that there are four interdependent key qualities that make a town good: Access, Activities, Comfort and Sociability.

Access. Do you travel by train, bus, car, foot, cycle, wheelchair or mobility scooter? Whichever way you get into town you will have an opinion on how easy or otherwise it is.

It is very interesting to reconsider this by trying unfamiliar ways of travelling around. You may have some suggestions for improvement, or at least begin to



An artist's impression of plans for Piries Place.

understand the difficulties of others. Horsham has many old buildings and these are not always adaptable for all users.

New developments, however, have no excuses. It is therefore a pity that the John

Lewis development gave little consideration to pedestrians.

Activities. These give a reason to visit and, if they are planned well, a desire to return. We have plenty to do including a theatre, cinema, swimming pool, gym, library, and museum.

The new cinemas are intended to attract customers to Horsham, but what impact will they have upon the local theatre and other users? Time will tell whether we have the right balance and whether they are aimed at all ages.

We also have significant green spaces e.g. Horsham Park, Warnham Nature Reserve, Chesworth Farm and the Riverside Walk. A number of volunteer organisations help support these spaces and are working to develop their use. And, there are special events in town on a regular basis. Do you support these places and events enough?

Comfort. Crime rates are comparably low, making Horsham a safe place to live.

The town is at its best on days when it looks clean and tidy, and people are being pleasant to each other. We can't blame the planners if this one goes wrong – it is the responsibility of everyone.

Sociability. Horsham is somewhere

we should be proud to bring family and friends.

There are plenty of restaurants and other meeting places, a number of social networks, churches, volunteer and support groups each contributing to the wider life of Horsham. Maybe you could try getting involved in a new one this year.

Horsham clearly is a good town. It has a range of social and economic activities, good schools and healthcare provision.

There are areas for improvement, but it is up to us to support what is going on, keep a watchful eye and, where possible, involve ourselves.

This can be done through supporting events, joining local organisations or volunteering to help the numerous support groups. Let's work together to make Horsham even better.

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 the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 261905.