



with Nigel Friswell

Horsham Society

Come walk with us for fascinating tour

Recently the Horsham District Council held a 'Visitor Economy Strategy Meeting' which analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the District in relation to tourism. Although the attendees from the villages thought that Horsham town got the most resources it does not always feel like that to those of us who live in the town.

Not everything can be provided by the council. The Horsham Society takes its constitutional duties seriously and a couple of years ago we recognised that some visitors would like to be shown round the town. So Horsham Welcome Walks was born. With the help of experienced guides from elsewhere and our local knowledge, we trained volunteers and launched the guided tours twice a week in 2016.

These were so successful and our guides were so enthusiastic that we repeated the formula this year but renamed Horsham Heritage Guided Walks. So, twice a week we set off for a 90 minute walk around the town.

The tour is free and we never know how many people will turn up. Sometimes it is six or eight, occasionally none at all (we



Horsham Welcome Walks are held twice a week.

thought about a booking system and about charging a fee but it all got too complicated to manage).

Visitors come from anywhere. Some from foreign countries, many from other parts of England but on most of our tours we find that some are local people who just want to find out more about the town. Our guides quite like to have local people in the tour group because they ask pertinent questions

and often add a bit of local knowledge or colour.

In the 90 minutes we can only cover the town centre and down to the river. If the visitors ask and don't mind extending the tour, we can go up to Horsham Park but this does make the tour rather long. Horsham has so much to see.

Although these tours are aimed at family-sized groups we do get enquiries from

larger groups; other amenity societies and historical groups such as U3A. It is difficult to cater for these at a moment's notice so we do ask for such groups to book in advance and we will try to provide as many guides as are needed for the size of the party.

Presently we have nine volunteer tour guides, which is just right for the tours we do. However, if you are interested in the history, architecture and people of Horsham and would like to join us, we would welcome another couple of guides. We will, of course, provide training (it is fun and not too onerous) and all the facilities you need as a tour guide.

Horsham Guided Heritage Walks are run twice a week, on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons, starting at 2.30pm from outside Horsham Museum in the Causeway. They are free and go ahead whatever the weather.

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 259038.