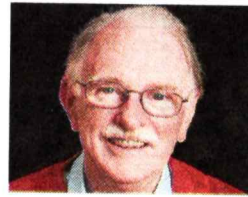


# Horsham Society

with Oliver Farley



## Widen the scope of Horsham's vision

**T**here's been lots of discussion lately about visions and the future, for our town and its citizens. On a wider scale the UN envisions that world population is pushing on towards 10 billion, that over half the world's present population live in towns and cities and that this trend will continue.

By 2030 it is estimated that 5 billion will live in cities and about half of that number will live in accommodation not yet built. Long gone are the days when we reflected with quiet satisfaction that London was the world's largest city; in the last half century Tokyo, Mumbai and Mexico have all easily surpassed our total as have many others.

So, how are we to plan the future of these huge megalopolises and do so without ruining an already badly stressed planet?

Here's where the direction of vision comes into play. Historically we have viewed our cities as part of our economic processes and given insufficient thought to the consequences.

Raw materials are fed in, duly processed and waste is carried away. It's a linear arrangement. The main elements involved are energy, water, food, minerals, waste and



Which way for Horsham's 'vision'?

transport.

We once considered these things abundant and natural, there for our constant exploitation, feeding progress. Now we have to think in a very different fashion. We have to reckon on the consequences of a wasteful society and

how we are compromising the entire world about us.

It's time to think circularly.

What we mean is to think in terms of how one process feeds into another and affects the total.

Take waste for example. Too much of value is thrown away and we need to exploit waste as a resource for re-use, as a fuel for energy generation and use the lessons of how successfully this can be done to adjust our production systems in the first place.

We have to think positively and build positive towns. More buildings with downtown roof gardens can produce garden produce at a competitive price at the point of consumption.

For example, vegetables are grown in the underground shelters at Clapham Common probably at considerable expense per unit, but they are right beside the restaurants and households which consume them so transport costs are negligible. The delivered cost is competitive.

Think too of transport on the larger scale and how to encourage more people to use public services rather than private cars. If we plan our cities with clean manufacturing and clean waste processes

then the old idea of zoning towns is much less persuasive.

If people can now live close to work, with leisure and greenery close to hand then walking and public buses are a tempting option.

There are simple and direct ways we can expand the circularity by, for example, charging a refundable deposit on drink containers. And refundable with a difference, as vouchers for public transport.

We've then even made the currency green.

These ideas are being tried out in the Netherlands, Denmark, Brazil and the US. Perhaps we could widen the scope of Horsham's recent vision to plan likewise.

We are grateful to the Scientific American, July 2017, for prompting some of these reflections.

*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](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or phone 01403 259038.*