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# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019



## Church Lane under threat

**A Planning Proposal was submitted to Huntingdon District Council in January 2019 to build a new house and separate garage at the rear of the former Vicarage, fronting onto Church Lane. The proposal has received much criticism both from local residents and neighbours. The land is currently owned by the Diocese of Ely. It is unusual for a planning proposal to receive so much public attention, so why is it so important to so many people?**

The site's boundary is on the Ouse Valley Walk and provides a delightful woodland haven for dog walkers, families and anyone wanting to find a little calm. The plot has 50 trees, 17 of which would be felled if the proposal goes ahead. Church Lane will once again be assaulted with construction traffic. Cambridgeshire has the lowest percentage of broadleaf woodland approx. 3.5% compared with the England average of 12%. There are some rare trees including 2 black poplars, Britain's most endangered broadleaf tree.

All of the immediate neighbours have lodged objections. A survey was presented to HDC and this had 20 signatories, with names and addresses. Cindy Blem-Larson, a resident of Church Lane, also canvassed names online and mounted a poster campaign. Huntingdon Town Council deferred a decision as they were waiting for CCC to do a Highways report and the ecological survey hadn't been done. The general consensus at HTC was to decline. The ecological survey is now being done. The planning officer at HDC thinks that there may be sufficient reasons to reject the proposal on the grounds of local opinion and ecological reason.

The site is at the heart of the Hartford Conservation Area. Although Hartford doesn't have a formal conservation area statement, according to the Huntingdonshire statement a conservation area is an area of special architecture and /or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. We feel that HTC and HDC are duty bound to reflect local feeling about a site. The many individual letters confirm people are strongly opposed to further development in Church Lane. We understand that the 'Whitehouse\*', the adjacent art deco house nearing completion, was only given approval after it went to the House of Lords and permission was only granted because there is a house on the other side of the road.

There is additional ground for having the plan declined and this rests with Highways - the road is not suitable for further development or widening. Road markings would need to be put in place along with increased signage which would ultimately destroy the very essence of the area.

There are also serious concerns from local residents about the capacity of the drains. Rain water from the estates beyond Main Street and Longstaff Way empty down there and they are continually overflowing.

*\*Footnote: Cambridgeshire County Homes, builders of the Whitehouse have promised to make good the ruts along Church Lane, both those of their contractors' vans and lorries plus further damage caused by utilities, bin lorries etc over the past winter.*



## SPEAKER MEETING

**TUESDAY 30TH APRIL:  
THE NEW CREMATORIUM**  
by Huntingdon Town Clerk Philip Peacock.  
7.15 for 7.30pm at Hartford Village Hall  
**£1.50 admission incl tea/ coffee**



## GERALD GIBBS

1919-2019

Gerald Gibbs, Founder member of Hartford Conservation Group since 1991 and President since 2012 died on January 24th 2019. Gerald was elected treasurer at the inaugural meeting and remained until the AGM of 2011 when he was elected President.

Gerald moved to Hartford from Hemingford Grey in 1981 and was very active, with other residents, in the early days when Redland Aggregates (later LaFarge ) proposed extracting gravel from the osier beds across the river. He was successful in getting Redland to agree arrangements to work only during daylight hours and not at weekends. He was also involved with the proposals for a Sainsbury Store and Garage on the Manor Farm site.

Gerald thoroughly enjoyed his life in Hartford with his late wife Jessie, spending holidays on the river on his boat Windward. He was a very keen and active amateur radio enthusiast and had his own "radio shack" in the garden where he collected and repaired vintage equipment. He belonged to several local groups including the Huntingdonshire Amateur Radio Society and Huntingdon Talking Newspaper among others.

Gerald was very anxious to reach his hundredth birthday but unfortunately this was not to be. His health deteriorated over the last year and he died on 24th January 2019.

His funeral was held at the Cambridge Crematorium on Thursday 28th February. It was well attended and some sixty family and friends congregated to pay their respects. Everyone gathered at Slepe Hall in St. Ives after the funeral. His ashes have now been laid to rest at All Saints Church in Hartford together with his wife Jessie. The family would like to thank all those who supported Gerald in his last few months, and also for the contributions that were made to the collection for Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind which was made in Gerald's memory at the funeral service.



## Thanks to the Litter Pickers!

Around 16 volunteers from the HCG and the local community turned out in March for our Spring Litter Pick with the result that once again the village looks (albeit briefly!) as we like to see it.



## Head for Heights.

Hartford's landmark Lombard poplar on Church Lane has been 'topped' by 40% to provide improved management in the future.

## Welcome to new committee members

We are pleased to announce 3 new co-opted members to the HCG committee:

Ste' Greenall, Mark Rosen and David Osborne.

With several long serving members of the existing committee standing down in October, we are happy to hear from other supporters who are keen to ensure the Conservation Group's continued role.

**Keep up to date with your local Conservation Group: minutes of our Committee Meetings are now displayed in our notice board at the bottom of Sapley Road and online at [www.hartfordconservation.org.uk](http://www.hartfordconservation.org.uk).**

*This newsletter is produced by Mike Humphrey of the Hartford Conservation Group who can be contacted on 01480 436 444 or email [info@hartfordconservation.org.uk](mailto:info@hartfordconservation.org.uk) .*