

Community  
Inclusive  
Vital  
Influential  
Creative

# Shaftesbury Civic Society

## Autumn Newsletter

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### A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

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*Shaftesbury Civic Society* Open Meeting, Shaftesbury Arts Centre on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 7.30pm.

#### SHAFTESBURY'S LEADING LADIES

Continuing our theme this year of celebrating the anniversaries of women's suffrage and universal franchise, Claire Commons, Shaftesbury's Town Clerk and Brie Logan, Shaftesbury Town Council's Business Manager will speak to us about the challenges, restraints and range of their roles.

**Please come along and bring your friends and find out how local government is working for us.**

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### NEW CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC SOCIETY: ROY MITCHELL

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The trustees are delighted to announce that Roy Mitchell has become our new chair. Roy and his wife chose to retire to Shaftesbury eight years ago, a town that they first came to on honeymoon when they stayed at The Mitre. Since then they have immersed themselves in town life and Roy is associated with the Twinning Association and Gold Hill Museum as well as *Shaftesbury Civic Society*.



In a recent interview with *This is Alfred*, (see next article) Roy said, "Shaftesbury has a marvellous history and it is a very special town. The wish of the Civic Society is to keep Shaftesbury special. We are very much an independent body and part of our remit is to make observations on developments within the area – to maintain that specialness. Roy doesn't want the society to be seen as NIMBY's, people who always say 'no' and want

Shaftesbury preserved in cotton wool. "We believe that any community that has no development is in

decline. We want to make sure that growth is managed carefully and in line with the beautiful surroundings in which we live. Trends occur. Changes take place. We should to keep up with those events”. Roy feels that *Shaftesbury Civic Society* should become the local think tank, putting forward ideas to the community and working out what is sustainable. He is particularly keen on finding a new role for the old supermarket building on Bell Street.

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## SHAFTESBURY GETS ITS OWN RADIO STATION

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You may have seen posts on social media, read news articles or listened to podcasts from ThisIsAlfred.com. Earlier this year, *Shaftesbury Civic Society* member Keri Jones set up the website ThisIsAlfred.com as a voluntary, community project to provide a new, positive place for Shaftesbury's good news.

“Newspapers often seem to feature bad news, conflicts, arguments or sensationalist stories. From my involvement with many Shaftesbury clubs and organisations, I had heard so many tales of success, achievement and of people making a difference, but these were not shared widely. So I set up Alfred as a place where we can all hear good news about the people who make our town special,” said Keri.

**ThisIsAlfred.com has taken off.** The ThisIsAlfred page on Facebook can reach 30,000 people each week. Keri has started adding good news stories to the website and social media every day. Some of the interviews and articles on ThisIsAlfred.com are being accessed by almost 4,000 different computers and devices each week.

“It’s really gratifying that we’re now starting to receive emails from individuals, clubs and businesses that have noticed a direct response following an article appearing on Alfred. The students operating the recent pop-up shop in the former Fork And Flowers store wrote to say that many of their visitors had learned about their project on ThisIsAlfred.com.

The website is unique because every story features audio of the person who was interviewed. “We don’t feature stories without the interviewee talking,” said Keri. “There’s no ‘fake news’ on ThisIsAlfred.com. You can click on a link next to each article to hear exactly what the person who is quoted actually said.”

Each week, Keri produces a weekly compilation of ThisIsAlfred.com interviews and audio reports in a podcast. It’s basically a radio programme that you can listen to on demand on the website, your phone or tablet.



But Keri hopes that Alfred will be available on FM radio soon.

Keri contacted Ofcom, the radio regulator, to ask them to consider licensing a Shaftesbury radio station last autumn. Ofcom confirmed that they had received just the one ‘expression of interest’ for a Shaftesbury area service. The radio licence could be advertised later this year.

Keri managed professional radio stations for nineteen years before he moved to Shaftesbury. He spent the last nine years running a community radio service in the South West and he is proposing that the Alfred Radio station would be a similar not-for-profit community initiative.

Jackie Upton King, from Shaftesbury Civic Society, has already agreed to get involved by making podcasts and radio programmes as part of the ThisIsAlfred.com initiative. Keri says he'd be delighted to offer training to anyone who doesn't have professional media or reporting experience. And he encourages anyone to email good news stories to [hello@ThisIsAlfred.com](mailto:hello@ThisIsAlfred.com).

You can visit the website at [ThisIsAlfred.com](http://ThisIsAlfred.com).

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## PLANNING MATTERS

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One of *Shaftesbury Civic Society's* main roles is to monitor planning applications and, where appropriate, make comments which we share with the planning authority, North Dorset District Council and with our Town Council. Our task is not to veto every application but to make constructive points that we hope make the case for Shaftesbury.

Currently, we are concerned with two major applications:

### The land north of Enmore Court

#### **Planning Application for 25 dwellings on land north of Enmore Court and off New Road, Shaftesbury (Application ref: 2/2018/0696/out)**

Following a successful overall campaign to protect the Northern Scarp Slopes of Shaftesbury and in particular the application for the development of 25 houses on New Road, there has been a total of 182 objections to the scheme and none supporting.

The main points of the objections have been based on the development being outside the Settlement Boundary, a substantial increase in traffic movements, lack of infrastructure in the locality and more particularly Shaftesbury as a whole, as well as the land not only being in Green Belt but also building on the unstable running Greensand.

There continues, however, to be a lot of activity by Nylo Homes, apparently looking at how the concerns over flooding are going to be approached with such a substantial development and they have also had the surveyors back to look at how a solution can be found to deal with any issues regarding traffic management.

The dates for public consultation and the determination date of September 7<sup>th</sup> have passed. The latter is the date that the Council should have made a decision to either back the proposals or refuse the application, there may still be an opportunity to lodge an objection on line (<https://planning.north-dorset.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=P92RS7LHGOA00>).

According to the Case Officer, no decision has been made as to whether the application will be determined by delegated powers or by committee. Should the matter go to public committee, it is imperative that as many Shaftesbury Residents attend to have their concerns voiced.

*Nicholas Mackay*

## The land on the corner of the A30 and the Higher Blandford Road,

### **2/2018/0602 OUT To determine access to the site for development of 55 houses**

The developer, Robert Tizzard, has applied for permission for an access to the site, off the B3081 Higher Blandford Road, just off the A330, to enable 55 houses to be built. As many of you will know these fields have wonderful views from the town out to Melbury Down and across to the AONB. It is also an important view from these areas into the town. North Dorset District Council have ruled out use of this site for housing and the planning inspector, when he examined the North Dorset Local Plan before its adoption also made clear that this land should be preserved as an important green space. This is the second application that the developer has made over the past three years and despite modification by reducing the number of houses, SCS believes that to grant this application would seriously undermine the integrity of the local plan, lead to further development on the fringes of the town and loss of very beautiful and important views.

There have been a good number of objections from local people and from many of the agencies concerned such as the AONB, CPRE, Natural England as well as the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Education department expressing their concerns and requirements for Additional funding to meet the need that would be created.

*N.B.King*

<https://planning.north-dorset.gov.uk/online-applications>

Civic Society members can make a real difference by writing to NDDC or posting their comments on the planning website. The planners are obliged to take into account the community's views when they are expressed in writing. It takes a few minutes, but we can all make a real difference by making that effort.

With a new initiative, SCS will attempt to notify members by email when they become aware of any significant application received by North Dorset but are also monitoring the situation over the border in Wiltshire, where we believe the next substantial development is likely to be proposed.

Please support our event on the 24<sup>th</sup> October and please spread the word, that *Shaftesbury Civic Society* is working hard to ensure that all of our community feel real pride in the place where they live.

We are always keen to have more hands-on help, contact us at: [shaftesburycivic@gmail.com](mailto:shaftesburycivic@gmail.com)