

Beccles Society News Sheet – March 2020

Dr. Nicholson Award

The purpose of the award is to encourage buildings of good design, imaginative ideas and quality development. Consideration is given to any development or building refurbishment within Beccles which improves or enhances the built structure of the town. We made the award to Brian Sabberton Limited for the tasteful and imaginative restoration of North House, which has been carried out to a high degree of quality. Part of this award is in recognition of the outstanding crinkle crankle wall constructed at the side of North House.

Speaker for the AGM, 8/4/20

Mike Wabe has been booked to give a talk on "Foul Murders in East Anglia" at the Sea Cadets building in Fen Lane. Please see attached sheet for further details.

HGV Movements in Beccles

Suffolk County Council have carried out extensive traffic counts in the area and these will shortly be presented to a meeting coordinated by Peter Aldous which we attend.

In the meantime, Beccles Town Council have recently agreed "To support in principle a 20mph zone for the whole of Beccles, including the installation of discreet and appropriate traffic calming measures,to support in principle the introduction of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction for Beccles Town Centre and to support the improvement of signage in relation to the Southern Relief Road."

Sign Clutter

We corresponded with Suffolk CC in connection with the following issue at the Market Street/Smallgate junction:-

"The traffic lights at this location incorporate .No right turn./.No left turn" signs within the head of the signal fixtures, making the free standing equivalent signs superfluous and hence redundant. In the interests of protecting the Conservation Area would you please arrange for the redundant signs to be removed."

The response explained that finance was limited but they would try to remove them when carrying out work at the Station road/ Newgate junction. This did not materialise.

We then wrote to Suffolk Preservation Society who publicised the problem in their Suffolk View journal. As a result of this and other steps taken, the duplicate signs and their poles have now been removed.

Quality of Place Awards

Suffolk Coastal District Council introduced their Quality of Place Awards competition back in 2010, aimed specifically at both recognising and encouraging interest in the quality of the built and natural environment within the district. This year Suffolk Coastal and Waveney finally amalgamated, forming East Suffolk Council. East Suffolk decided to extend the Quality of Place competition this year to the whole of the new District and agreed that the judging panel would include a representative from one civic society. The Beccles Society is honoured to be the first society invited onto the panel.

The contest offers four separate categories for entrants to choose from and this year saw a total of nineteen entrants, reduced in the first round of judging to ten. Each of the ten were then visited by the judges with a final result of five winners distributed over the categories plus a further two highly commended entrants. Winners received a bronze plaque and certificate while those commended received a certificate.

In our vicinity, Kirkley Place in Lowestoft and a Listening Station and Watch Room in Reydon were the Design Joint winners.

Pound Booklet

Beccles Pound is a rare building, being one of only two in Suffolk and has recently been restored following the collision of a lorry. The old booklet about the history of the Pound has been largely retyped and includes some new illustrations, though the original spelling mistakes have been retained in the interests of authenticity with the original script.

A copy was presented to the mayor at a special Council Awards meeting in December, and copies are now going on sale at venues such as Beccles Museum and St Michael's Church. It will retail at £2.00.

Commemoration Plaque Review

About 38 years ago Beccles Society placed commemoration plaques around the town. Consideration was recently given to either replacing or upgrading them, but the costs involved were outside the scope of our funds. However it was soon realised that no complete record existed of where they were or their present condition.

A new document was therefore produced, which was primarily a review of the plaques in existence and records both those erected by Beccles Society and Beccles Town/ Beccles Borough Councils.

The opportunity was also taken to include the Historic England listed properties within and around the town. The list is extensive, with six grade 1 properties and no less than 140 grade 2 buildings.

Three copies of the document were produced of which one was for the Town Council, one for Beccles and District Museum and one retained by Beccles Society. The first two were presented to both organisations at the special Council Awards meeting in December.

Neighbourhood Plan

For the past six months I have been chairing the Neighbourhood Plan Operation Group. Following the public consultation exercise in June 2019, the draft Plan was amended to take on board the comments raised. It has since been approved by the Town Council for submission to East Suffolk Council, once we have prepared all the ancillary documents. It will subsequently go to an appointed Examiner, and if approved, there will then be a public referendum of Beccles residents.

Planning Applications

1. An application for Morrison's Totem Pole, which was to be located adjacent to the A146 was refused following objections from Beccles Society and the Town Council.

2. We also objected to a planning application in Hungate Court for a nursery and gun shop on the grounds of insufficient car parking, but it was subsequently approved.

3. An application for a replacement bay window with Bi-fold doors and a Juliet balcony at 19 Puddingmoor was refused following objections from Beccles Society and 8 others with the chief reason being that it was incompatible with the aims of protecting the Conservation Area.

4. Ingate Iron Works

The demolition contractor caused consternation among local residents when removing asbestos from this site. The roof of each building was dropped, apparently without it being water sprayed which could possibly allow asbestos dust to blow around the site. We sent several emails to East Suffolk Planners regarding this unsatisfactory situation.

Paul Fletcher, Chairman.