

SOUTHWOLD AND REYDON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER JULY 2017

If it's not real fires on the Common, it's potential flooding on the marshes. Our June meeting covered a wide range of topics – but the more pressing items seem to have a momentum (or a frustrating lack of it) of their own.

The recent spate of fires prompted discussion on the need for increased precautions for the future (more, or wider, fire-breaks on the Common, for instance) and the problems of clearing and rejuvenating the gorse. We may be heading for a dry summer and rapid action is needed by the Common Trust and the Town Council by way of a review of the present situation and implementation of new fire prevention or containment measures. We are glad to hear that these two bodies are actively considering what to do. If needed, we are sure our members and others would volunteer to help in work such as clearing areas of the common and in removing litter.

If we'd just heard that all pubs in Southwold were about to close there would soon be an urgent plan to save them. Southwold without pubs?

It's just unthinkable.

Compare this with the opacity surrounding the future of the Harbour area and its ownership and management, its maintenance and development. If we can set aside the decades of tangled history of the first two, we cannot ignore potential risks from the latter – harbour walls, sluices, banks and dykes are all expensive to maintain and some are already dilapidated. The Society supports *any* efforts to discuss and develop a strategy for the Harbour's healthy survival. But who's going to deal with it? And what's planned? And when? Southwold without a harbour? Or a Caravan site?

It's just possible.

After much to-ing and fro-ing, Sport England have withdrawn their objection to the proposed housing development on the St Felix rugby pitch having considered further proposals for replacement sports facilities (which the Society found unsatisfactory, as did Reydon Parish Council). All now rests with Waveney whose policies to protect the AONB and maintain the boundary of the built area of Reydon village will be put to the test. Elsewhere in the plan it *appears* (although it's confusing) that the replacement pitch will impinge on the existing wildlife site. We hope this does not entail too much disturbance for the long-suffering gorse, which has survived the ravages of rabbits and muntjacs for years.

Thankfully, there are no gorse-bushes on Reydon's Jubilee Green and it's well above sea-level. This doesn't mean that it hasn't taken a frustrating amount of time and an enormous effort to complete the hand-over of the Green to the village. But it's happened at last. The "keep off" chains have gone and plans for public footpaths, a bus shelter and a storage and water supply for the gardeners are being finalised. In anticipation, the community gardeners are sharpening their forks. Congratulations to all and to Reydon Parish Council on securing this asset for the future.

Ridley Burnett, Vice-Chairman