

March 2016 Magazine Article

This month, we cover several issues to update members and other readers who are welcome to join our growing number of over 400 members by contacting info@southwoldandreydonsociety.org.uk.

Car Parking in Southwold: The Town Council plans to commission consultants to review car parking in the town. We welcome this step which is in the Town Plan. Radical measures may be needed to balance the needs of residents, the interests of visitors and ongoing pressures on council budgets, indeed perhaps charging on Town run carparks. We understand that Waveney are likely to introduce charges for the currently free car park in Ferry Road (adjacent to the Sail Loft) which raises the issue of what benefit is gained by Southwold from the income collected by Waveney from car parking.

Public Toilets: We note that our MP, Therese Coffey, believes that there is no case for free public toilets provided by local authorities. Coincidentally, this comment was made as Waveney plans to divest itself of public toilets, including the three it maintains in Southwold (at the pier, by the caravan site and on Church Green). We believe that public toilets are needed in towns like Southwold which depend on visitors. If the Town Council takes over these toilets, this will be another pressure on its over-stretched budget. Perhaps Waveney could also transfer the car parks to the Town Council so the income can be used to maintain the facilities we need, including toilets.

Premises of Southwold Hospital: Southwold Town Council has successfully applied for designation of this property as a community asset. NHS Property Services now has to allow six months before proceeding with a commercial sale. The Town Council has asked residents for ideas for community uses and for sources of sponsorship to retain the property for the community. Suggestions to date include the relocation of the library and provision of premises for locally based businesses. These are good ideas aimed at maintaining the diversity and viability of the town but raising the funds to secure the property will be challenging.

Rail Service Interruptions: The disruption of weekend rail services to London (with most journeys interrupted by bus replacement sections) will continue into May. With no option but to put up with the service provided by Greater Anglia, we can only hope that the work being undertaken actually leads to real improvements. These have often been promised but rarely seem to materialise.

Sizewell C: Nicola Corbett from EDF met our Committee in February and briefed us on the plans for a new nuclear power station at Sizewell. Once a final decision is made to develop a new nuclear plant at Hinkley in Somerset, the plans for Sizewell will move into a second phase of consultation locally. This will include arrangements for construction such as worker accommodation, park and ride facilities on the A12, including at Darsham, and some improvements to the A12, especially at Farnham. Whatever one's view of nuclear power, the development and running of Sizewell C will have a major impact locally. We will ensure the Society keeps track of this so members are able to have their say.

Philip O'Hear, Secretary