

Southwold and Reydon Society report, January 2015

During 2014 the Society has supported the Reydon Village Plan, with several members being active on the Steering Group, and members from both Southwold and Reydon helping with delivery of questionnaires. Our AGM included a vigorous and informative debate about the scope and purpose of neighbourhood plans. We have agreed to provide what help we can with the Southwold Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan while reserving the right to continue to campaign on issues not covered by STC's Plan.

Southwold High Street remains our main battleground and it has been a frustrating year with landlords increasing the rents to levels that only national chains can afford. Several excellent independent shops have been lost this year and several new national chains have come in. We have had a working group trying to come up with ways to defend the High Street. One promising idea is to try to persuade Waveney District Council to refuse proposals to expand the footprint of shops, in the hopes that this will favour independents over national chains.

On the environmental front we have been trying to follow up issues from the Southwold Town Plan with the relevant agencies. One small success has been new notices at the entry points to the sea front reminding dog-owners of the regulations in place during the summer months. We continue to run our very successful doggie bag scheme.

The Society is monitoring developments at the Southwold Caravan Park. This is in urgent need of refurbishment, but any redevelopment should not be at the expense of existing tenants, and obviously should not be out of keeping with Southwold and Walberswick. The Society hopes to work with Southwold Town Council to develop a vision for the 'Southwold Gateway', as the former service station, fire station and police station sites are redeveloped.

We are also taking an active part in the campaign to preserve the First World War pillbox at Might's Bridge, one of only a few such objects surviving in Suffolk

The Society's Excellence Awards were a great success at our AGM in April, with recipients clearly delighted to be recognised in this way. This was our fourth set of awards and so far 24 individuals and organisations have been honoured by the Society with award certificates.

Our Committee this year has been Tony Evans (Vice-Chair), John Perkins (Secretary), John Stewart (President), Jon Hadgraft (Membership Secretary), Brian Harrild (Treasurer), Ridley Burnett, Sue Doy, Peter Fells, Dexter Kirk, Philip O'Hear, Stephanie Holt and Pam O'Hara, with Mischa Lester as a co-opted member. Many thanks to all of them

The Society was saddened by the death of P.D. James in November. She was a strong supporter of the Society and its campaigns.

Michael Rowan-Robinson, Chair