

# The Friends of the Forster Country

# Newsletter

Issue No 43. September 2016

## Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan

An inspector has now been appointed to examine the SBC Local Plan, but no dates have been set. We have not yet been given a name for the Inspector but the SBC appointed Programme Officer is Louise St John Howe. She can be contacted at SBC if you would like to seek any details. We believe that the inspection will take place in early 2017.

The Local Plan that was at draft stage in January 2016 and which received many comments from the public has been submitted without amendment. We feel that this is somewhat surprising as we are aware at least of factual inaccuracies.

As reported previously, the Plan does include the effective destruction of Forster Country. We have asked for oral hearings at the Inspection and are preparing our case for the defence. There is discussion going on about employment of a professional lawyer to help us but we have limited funds to fight on a protracted basis.

We remain hopeful that the Inspector will be sympathetic to our position.

*John Spiers*



## Summer walks



Photo Anne Conchie

Two walks organised and led by committee members took place in Forster Country this summer. These always attract interest from new people as well as old friends and give publicity to our organisation.

The first on May 7th was led by Marion Ohlendorf and was in connection with the Stevenage Walking Festival. The most recent, led by Anne Conchie, took place on July 9th as part of the Stevenage Celebrates programme of events.

This latter walk was special in that it covered ground to which we don't normally have access as it is privately owned. Anne found the landowners co-operative and helpful and friendly contacts were made. The weather was perfect - sunny but not too hot. There was a good turn-out of enthusiasts on both occasions.

# A Room with a View

The actress, Abigail McKern, (known to television viewers from her appearances in 'Rumpole of the Bailey') visited Rooks Nest House one Sunday in August. She was visiting friends in Hitchin and had no idea until they told her that E M Forster's childhood home was just down the road.

She was enthused by her visit and took lots of photographs. She lives too far away to want to join FOFC but approved of our aims and made contact to say so.

Her particular interest at this time is that she will be playing Mrs

Honeychurch and Felicity Kendall will be playing Charlotte Bartlett (mother and aunt respectively of the heroine, Lucy) in a production of 'A Room with a View' which will be touring the country this autumn.

The production reaches Cambridge in November (14th-19th) and some of the committee members are hoping to go to see it on the Wednesday. Perhaps other Friends will buy tickets too.

The production is booked for Bath, Brighton, Guilford, Richmond and Chichester as well and may go on to the West End after that.

## AGM

By kind permission of Anne Newman, the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Forster Country took place in the grounds of Rooks Nest House on Saturday, June 25th. It was a fine day, despite the threat of rain, and, anyway, the marquee loaned by our Vice-Chairman would have provided shelter if necessary. The reports were brief and, needless to say, there being no new nominations (and no resignations), the committee was re-elected en bloc. After the business, the usual committee-made cakes were enjoyed, with our hostess helping to serve the tea on the lawn.

We took advantage of the occasion to launch the Forster Country Guide and Friends who attended each received a free copy. We are including a copy for you with this Newsletter and hope you will agree that it is an attractive and readable publication. Should you already have a copy, please pass this on to someone else, as we want to inform

as many people as possible about this precious piece of land.

The costs were generously covered by our patron, Nicola Beauman, so you needn't worry that your subscriptions are being extravagantly used!



## Memorial Lecture

The John Hepworth Memorial Lecture will be held on Saturday, November 12th at 2.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber of Daneshill House.

The speaker will be Margaret Ashby (MA MCILIP Dip.Ed.) and the title of her talk, to coincide with the Seventieth Anniversary of the New Town's conception, is 'Stevenage First and Best'.

There is no increase in the ticket price which remains £3. Tickets may be obtained from Angela Hepworth, 1 Gloucester Close, Stevenage, SG1 3RQ; telephone 01438 351462; e-mail [angelahepworth@btopenworld.com](mailto:angelahepworth@btopenworld.com) or from any committee member, or purchased at the door on the day..

## Membership renewals

Thanks to all who renewed their membership so promptly this year and a special thank you to those who made an extra donation. Since Forster Country is again under threat of major development, we may need these resources to pay for legal advice.



### Patrons of the Friends of the Forster Country

Margaret Ashby. Nicola Beauman. Barbara Follett. Sir Andrew Motion. John Pilgrim. Richard Whitmore

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