

THE HEXPRESS

YOUR FREE HEXTHORPE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER No. 95 AUGUST 2015

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FURTHER DELAY ON THE OLD PLANT SITE



There has been yet another delay in the building of the new homes planned for the former Hexthorpe Plant Works site. We understand that the scheme has been put on hold yet again.

In December of last year the Doncaster Council Planning Committee gave the green light for the housing scheme to go ahead. They announced that they were happy with amended designs submitted by Persimmon Homes. Our local councillors expressed their delight that the long awaited scheme

would now be able to go ahead as soon as possible.

The Hexpress understands that Persimmon is no longer involved. A spokesman from Doncaster Planning says, "Planning permission has been granted. However, I understand from Persimmon Homes, who had an option on the site, that the Bank who now holds the land has removed the land from sale to them. (*The original purchasers, Woodfield Land, went into administration.*) We have done all we can to help the development to be viable; unfortunately the Bank choosing to re-market the land is outside of our control. The planning approvals are in place ready for when the development can commence."

The site was first purchased by Woodford in June 2005 for the sum of £9,975,000. In 2006 they began the task of making the 79 acre site safe from flooding and also from pollution. The site had been contaminated with industrial waste in the form of asbestos. Therefore, the site was capped. Hundreds of barge loads of limestone was carried down the River Don from the Conisbrough area to be delivered to the site.

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the River Don
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In February 2006, Woodfords entered into an option agreement for the sale of 43 acres of the land to Persimmon Homes.

In 2008 Persimmon was granted outline permission for a scheme to build 700 homes, a retail store and two office blocks.

In April 2010 The Woodford Group collapsed and went into administration. HSBC Bank took the land under security for a loan. In 2011 there was a claim in the courts from Woodford that Persimmon should be responsible for the payment of £4.5m for development costs (that included the cost of affordable housing).

The case was ruled in the favour of Persimmon.

In 2014 Persimmon Houses submitted a revised scheme to the Doncaster Planning Committee and it is that scheme that was approved in December of last year.

What is in the approved scheme?

Persimmon had to reduce the number of homes proposed by more than half and remove the commercial element. This was for several reasons: 1 The economic downturn. 2 The South Yorkshire Police architectural liaison officer had warned that the houses were planned too densely and was concerned that it could result in poor parking; this could lead to disputes. Persimmon had taken note of this and amended the plans to reduce the number of dwellings. Also changes had been made to the road layout, walls, fencing and increases to rear garden size to boost separation distances.

The following number and types of housing have been approved:

4 bedroom detached houses: 17

4 bedroom town houses: 2

4 bedroom semi detached houses: 7

3 bedroom detached houses: 15

3 bedroom town houses: 10

3 bedroom semi detached houses: 32

3 bedroom town houses: 52

2 bedroom town houses: 57

2 bedroom flats: 48

Total: 230

This is the plan, submitted by Persimmon Homes, that has been approved. Since the Bank removed Persimmon's option on the land, it seems that the scheme is now awaiting HSBC to find a client to make it a reality.

However, is there any other use to which the land could be put? Any ideas?

Letters

The Flintham's Old Shop

Dear Editor

I lived at Hexthorpe from being born in 1947 until getting married in 1970. I have many happy memories from those days; but one abiding memory is of Flintham's shop which sold everything and anything. I used to spend an age wistfully looking in the windows at things I couldn't afford and the old shop has always stayed in my memory. I write a little bit here and there, and one day wrote a poem about the Old Shop which was on Hexthorpe Road, on the opposite corner to Gibson's fruit and veg shop. That was at the corner of Stone Close Avenue. I showed the poem to my friend Pat who ran the ladies hairdresser's next to the Post Office for 30 years. She asked me to send the poem in case you had a little slot to fill in the Hexpress.

Yours truly
Brian Webb

Ed. We are very happy to have received this letter and the poem can be found on page 7.

New Series on the River Don
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A Big Thank You

Dear Editor

I want to give heartfelt thanks to Aaron, the Hexthorpe Community Officer. When our invalid scooter refused to budge he pushed it, with my husband on it, nearly a mile to our home. His kind help was much appreciated.

Yours
Sylvia H

Litter

Dear Editor

There are continuing complaints about the rubbish that is deposited in the backs and streets of our community. I would like to raise the matter of litter that is just thrown down on the roads and pathways. I was disgusted as I walked down Urban Road between Salisbury Road and the Bowling Club. There was almost more litter than pavement to be seen. I believe that this is not just one section of our community to be blamed. It is the job of us all to take our litter home. How many times have you seen someone just drop a wrapper or whatever down on the ground? It is not just the youngsters either.

Name and Address supplied

This is your Forum

We would love to hear from you. On this page there are letters that raise matters of concern to residents. Also there is a good news message. If there are any issues that concern you or that delight you about our community, then please let us know.

LOCAL NEWS IN BRIEF

A new Head for Hexthorpe School

Mrs Nicola Parker-Watts has been appointed as the new Head Teacher for Hexthorpe School. She took up her position at the beginning of the summer term. On the school website she writes, “Our aim is to establish and maintain high standards of work and behaviour in a caring and welcoming environment. We believe that the partnership between home and school is very important and continually strive to develop this link.” We welcome Mrs Parker-Watts. The school is a very important part of our community and has a long tradition of community involvement. Hexthorpe is proud of having such a thriving school. We are sure that all will want to support her in her new role and wish Mrs Parker-Watts, the staff and governors well in the coming years.

Election results for the new ward of Hexthorpe and Balby North

Local elections were held in May for the new Doncaster Council. There has been a readjustment of the wards. Previously there were 63; this has been reduced to 55. Hexthorpe was in the Central ward with three councillors. Now it is in a new ward called Hexthorpe and Balby North with only two councillors. Consequently one of our three councillors had to stand down. This was John McHale, but he was a candidate in the Doncaster Town ward. John was elected as a councillor for that ward coming first in the poll, out of 9 candidates, with 2,662 votes. Our two remaining councillors - Glyn Jones and Sue Wilkinson were both re-elected. The results for the Hexthorpe and Balby Ward were as follows:

Glyn Jones (Lab) 1902

Mike Robertson (UKIP) 1382

Theresa Rollinson (TUSU) 405

Sue Wilkinson (Lab) 1625

They have been elected for a term of two years. Then in 2017 there will be another election. This will be held at the same as the mayoral election and will be for a term of four years.

Hexpress Comment

As a result of the changes we no longer have John McHale as one of our councillors. We are sure that all our readers would want us to say how much we have appreciated his contribution to the life of the Hexthorpe community. John has always been available, whether in the streets, the bus, in town or on visits to homes. He was, and still is in his new ward, a typical traditional councillor. He was interested in the community and in people. For example, John often visited people who were bereaved and attended many funerals; he took up people's concerns and always responded quickly to requests for help or advice. We will miss him, but we still have our two remaining councillors. Their workload must have increased and we are sure that the community will want to support them in all their efforts on our behalf.

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A Hexthorpe Local History Group?

There is an increasing interest in local history. There are a number of local community history groups in Doncaster. Hexthorpe has a rich heritage. In this issue of the Hexpress there are references to the old Plant Works site, and some memories of the River Don. Are you interested in discussing the possibility of forming a group to discover and record our heritage? A meeting has been arranged for Thursday 3rd September in the foyer of the King's Cross Church on Urban Road, commencing at 7.00 pm. If you are interested please come on that day or contact Donald on Tel 852521 or via thehexpress.co.uk website.

Some Good Community Involvement

Volunteers from the Junction have been cleaning up the planters in some of the Hexthorpe streets. Rubbish has been constantly dumped in them. Led by the Junction manager Lynn and Mick, Chris and Shaun from the Safer Neighbourhood team, volunteers have been working hard to improve the environment. Some members of the community have joined with them. This is a positive move and hopefully residents will appreciate these efforts and keep the planters clear of rubbish.

Good news for the park

We understand that the second bowling green is to be opened for the public to play. Janet from the Dell Café has been successful in her application for bowls equipment. Look out for the arrangements that are to be made to open up the green.

The old crazy golf course has been renovated. It is looking splendid in its new coat of paint. This has been done by community volunteers under the auspices of the Hexthorpe Community Enterprise.

A number of people have commented that the park is being given a new lease of life. The community picnics, the Fun Days, the Dell Café are attracting more people there. The tennis courts are often full with families playing there. It is an excellent resource for the community. 'I would love to see band concerts in the Dell again', said one elderly resident. Any reason why not?

It was a Happy Birthday

The Dell Café recently celebrated the first anniversary of its opening. Janet and Lizzie reported that it was busy with visitors all day. There were activities on the grass, including craft stalls, games and community information. As well as the regular customers, almost everyday someone from outside the area calls in. They are often here to visit the park to remember old days. They are always delighted to see the new Dell Café. One man was in Hexthorpe and came to the park to see if the Dell Café was still there. He soon realised it still was, but a modern version! He was thrilled to see what excellent use had been made of an old derelict building.

Two Hexthorpe Stalwarts Pass Away

We have to report the passing of two Hexthorpe residents who have made a valuable contribution to Hexthorpe life. Alice Walton of Old Hexthorpe and John Stephenson, formerly of Old Hexthorpe and latterly of Warde Aldam Care Home in South Elmsall, were both in their nineties. We will give an account of their interesting and rewarding lives in our next issue.

Memories of the River Don

The River Don is an important feature of Hexthorpe. Together with the railways it has played a large part in the development of our unique community. Hexthorpe's boundaries are clearly defined. We all know where Hexthorpe begins and ends. The river and railway enclose us; there are only two ways in over the railway bridges. Many people have said that we could easily declare independence by closing the two bridges! Perhaps some local people never get to see the river. It is well worth a visit to the Flatts (park), especially when there are special events on there or just to have a coffee at the Dell Café.

We are hoping to have a series of articles about the River Don. We begin today with an article that draws on the memories of older residents still living here. Therefore it will be mainly concentrating on memories of the river during the first 60 years or so of the 20th century.

The first comment made by most people is how polluted the river was. It rises in the Pennines and flows for 70miles (110km) eastwards towards the Ouse and Trent rivers. By the time it arrived at Hexthorpe the river was highly polluted. Someone described it as being like a thick stew and smelling terrible in hot weather. It was dangerous to swim in, not only because of the currents but also because of the high risk of contracting some dangerous disease! Despite all this, some foolhardy people ventured in. Sadly, there were a number of drownings.

The river had been exposed to mining near Penistone where ochre gave it an orange colour; to the inadequate treatment of sewage effluent; to the heavy industries - mining and steel - as it passed through Sheffield and Rotherham; to the polluted rivers of Dearne and Rother as they joined the Don.

However, the river itself and the banks were used for leisure pursuits. As featured in a recent Hexpress, there was a boathouse that hired out rowing boats. This was highly popular at summer week-ends. The pathways by the river were very clear and easy to walk on. Sunday afternoon was the time to dress up and parade through the Flatts and the Dell and also down the riverside pathways. One could walk through to the horseshoe tunnel - that led to Balby and Warmsworth - or down to the two railways bridges. If you were feeling really energetic then the way was clear to the Sprotbrough falls.

There were two ravines 100 yards or so from the boathouse. In one of them was a narrow cave. Many youngsters played there. Imaginations ran riot. It was given the name of Dick Turpin's Cave and some said it was a secret passage to Conisbrough Castle!

Barges carrying products from upstream frequently passed by. Limestone and coal were their main cargo. Some people remember the barges being pulled by horses. The tow path was on the far side of the river. The banks were clear of trees and bushes allowing the horses free passage. There are some trees on the opposite bank today, but it is still much clearer than the Hexthorpe side. As well as horses, some barges had sails on them; is there anyone who remembers those days?

THE OLD SHOP

A Tribute to Flintham's, Urban Road

The big shop on the corner was magic when I was young.
It sold almost everything and offered so much fun.
I peered through the windows, at things I couldn't afford,
Spending ages looking in and never getting bored.

There were little painted figures and pictures in nice frames,
China cups and saucers, and spices with strange names.
A notice on the door that read, 'We sell paraffin too'.
People used to take their cans, for a gallon of Esso blue.

It sold safety pins and hairpins, cotton and thread as well.
If you had a bicycle you could even buy a bell.
Nails and screws all shapes and sizes, fit for any job.
They were weighed out on the scales, and cost less than a bob.

Mum used to buy her hairnets there, for a couple of pence.
Dad would buy his creosote, to help preserve the fence.
The window round the corner was the one I liked the best,
It was full of books and jigsaws, toy soldiers and the rest.

There were dinky toys and matchbox cars, even cricket bats,
Cowboy outfits, six-guns too, and Davy Crocket hats.
It had hula-hoops and yo-yos, and things for all the girls,
Like little dolls and make-up kits and imitation pearls.

It really was a wonderland for little kids like me.
It was something that I would have liked my own kids to have seen.
Then the supermarkets came along, offering competition.
Now that old shop has disappeared, along with the tradition.

Brian Webb

Ed. It really is a marvellous poem, recalling exactly the thrill of a small boy looking through the windows of a wonder world! It must recall many memories for some of our older readers. However, the sentiments of the last two lines are for all of us. Cherish the local shops that we have now. There is something personal about a small shop that the supermarkets can never match.

WHO'S WHO

Local Councillors

Sue Wilkinson Tel. 01302 817206

Glyn Jones Tel. 01302 816881

Methodist Minister

Rev Ian S Rutherford Tel: 01302 852024

Parish Priest

Fr Stephen Edmonds Tel. 01709 858358

Hexthorpe Community Constable

Contact Sergeant Butler Tel: 01302 385339

Stronger Community Officers

Contact: Tel. 01302 736930

PACT MEETINGS

These are held the last Thursday in the month at 2.00pm at St Jude's Parish Hall. All residents are invited to meet and ask questions of the local police officers.

The Junction

The Junction is open to all from 10.00am-4.00pm each weekday. There is a comfortable drop-in where you can spend as much or as little time as you like. You can have a tea or coffee and join in the friendly chat or just sit in peace.

Members of staff are happy to talk privately with you if you need to talk over something, or need some specific advice or help. There is a computer suite with free broadband access for all. Free computer courses are also available. For further information or help please call in or ring 01302 349341.

Any letters, articles, adverts contact:

thehexpress.co.uk or Donald 01302 852521

WEEKLY EVENTS

The King's Cross Church Hall (Methodist)

Monday

3.30pm Mini Cruz Key Stage 1 children

Tuesday

9.15-11.00am S.A.R.A Group
(Stay and Rest Awhile)

Mums and Tots Group

Mega Cruz School Years 3-6

7.25pm The Club with No Name School Year 7 and upwards

Wednesday

12.30pm Luncheon Club(first of each month)

2.00-3.00pm Line Dancing

You are invited on any Sunday to the Worship Services at The King's Cross Church
10.30am and 6.00pm

At Hexthorpe Parish Hall (St Jude's) Laughton Road, Hexthorpe

Monday

1.30-3.00pm Yoga

Wednesday

10.00-11.00am Keep Fit

11.00-11.30am Coffee Morning

Thursday

2.00-3.00pm PACT meeting (see opposite)

4.45-5.45pm Keep Fit

Friday

9.30-10.30am Play/Learn (Mums & Toddlers)

4.30-6.30pm Youth Club(4-13 years old)

7.00-9.00pm Youth Club(14-18 years old)

Booking Manager: Sue Large: Tel. 07582 812440
The Hall is available for hire for parties and other special events.

Sunday Services

10.00am Morning Prayer

11.00am Parish Mass