



EXETER CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2011 2010

AN URGENT CALL TO ALL MEMBERS

BEST WISHES TO YOU ALL FOR THE NEW YEAR
MAY THE FUTURE BE BRIGHT FOR ALL OUR MEMBERS

But what does the future hold for Exeter Civic Society?

It is unfortunate that my first newsletter communication with you as your Chairman could well be my last: **the future of the Society is in grave danger.**

As those who attended the 2010 AGM last October are already aware, serious problems of administration (see overleaf) face the Society. Members need to understand that if we do not resolve these in the immediate future the Society cannot retain its charitable status.

This newsletter is therefore a **call to all members** to join in making the right decision on the Society's future. Has the time come to acknowledge that the Society is no longer sustainable? Or are there volunteers out there who are keen to take an active part in revitalising the Society and promoting its contribution to Exeter life?

Overleaf you will find the information that you need in order to make your decision as a member of Exeter Civic Society.

Meantime, please note that in the absence of essential Officers the Society is not currently viable.

The final decision on the future of the Society will be made at an Extraordinary General Meeting to be held on Saturday 26th March 2011 at 10.30 for 11.00am in the Music Room of Exeter Central Library (free refreshments).

The problems which we are facing are not new, but stem from a fundamental weakness in the Society which, thanks to the dedication of a very few, has been tolerated longer than it should. That weakness is the longstanding lack of members coming forward to contribute their expertise and enthusiasm to the running of the Society. Committee members have been too few to implement new ideas; Society officers have shouldered responsibilities for years longer than they bargained for; and when at the AGM we had no replacements either for Secretary or Treasurer we realised that we are at crisis point.

Following an open invitation at the AGM, a small group of concerned members met with the Chairman to discuss the situation informally. This Newsletter reflects their various views, which may be summarised thus:

- A. The Society has an excellent remit.
Yet its membership is low.
- B. Its administration has reached crisis point.
This is not a sudden development.
- C. All the indications are that this is a Society that has had its day.
It is time to present the position to members.
- D. It is time to reach a positive decision on the future of the Society.
This decision must be made soon, and be final.

The group could see no point in prolonging this period of suspended animation, and resolved to focus on a

DEADLINE for final decision SPRING 2011

If the decision is that the Society should fold, the deadline for concluding winding-up procedures will be the end of our current Society year, ie. October 2011

I must make clear that those who attended the discussion group were open-minded . We would all like to see the Exeter Civic Society continue, and develop a significant role in Exeter life, **but only if its running can be shared out amongst a larger team of actively interested members.**

We have set up the March Extraordinary General Meeting as an opportunity to explore members' suggestions, hear from a representative of the thriving

Civic Society in Torquay, and assess the likelihood of a positive long-term future for our Exeter Society.

If our problems are not fully resolved at that meeting, it will form part of the Dissolution process as set out in the Society's Constitution.

**WHAT WE MUST HAVE IN PLACE BY THE END OF MARCH 2011
(or cease to qualify for charitable status)**

A Secretary

A Treasurer

OTHER VACANCIES ON THE COMMITTEE:

Minuting Secretary

Membership Secretary

Vice-Chairman

Our Constitution requires quarterly committee meetings. I propose to use the time as much as possible for open discussion – come and enjoy!

WHAT WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HAVE :

- A. More members involved on the Planning Sub-Committee: All members are aware of the excellent access to information on planning applications that the sub-committee enjoys, and regularly reports on to the Society at large. However, the sub-committee has few members and would benefit from keen additions who can give time to studying proposals and writing up reports.
- B. A team of keen volunteers willing to be the named co-ordinators for various initiatives to revitalise the Society. Members could then contact them direct with any relevant ideas and offers of help.

Suggestions so far:

Publicity:

Any offers to work on an attractive recruitment leaflet? Our membership is pitifully low, and probably not representative of the full range of Exeter's population.

Links with the Media:

Does any member have reliable contacts? We need to be noticed.

