

David Moore: we must get changes to the Bishopric area right



people's views might be, like everything else in life it's time to move on.

The next major project that will soon be underway is the consideration of what to do in the Bishopric area, especially the area leading from the bottom of West Street to Albion Way.

At the moment this has the appearance of a ghetto what with the defunct Shelley Fountain, which gets grubbier by the day, and the boarded up shop frontage of what was McDonalds in the Bishops Weald building.

It looks ghastly and one has to wonder how long it will be left in this state. Surely, the developer can make the boarding look more attractive pictorially as has been done so successfully with vacant

premises in Swan Walk, for example?

Separately, Horsham District Council has turned its attention to what might be done to improve the Bishopric area in the longer term and make it look more attractive as a continuation of its town centre project.

Funds are now available for this work and a consultant has been engaged to come up with some possible options.

Part of the project will have to include consideration of what to do with the Shelley Fountain.

On the face of it, disposal seems to be the only viable option followed by its replacement with an appropriate piece of public art, which people will find attractive. There's no doubt

that Lynd Cross is clearly in need of improvement, whilst there's little obviously wrong with the eastern arm of Bishopric.

The existing greenery forms a useful acoustic and visual barrier to the traffic moving along Albion Way, and together with the current water features make it a pleasant area in which to sit.

A very strong case would need to be made to justify any disturbance of this area.

It will also be essential to achieve viable connectivity between the new edge of town Waitrose and John Lewis development, in order to enhance footfall into West Street and into the town centre.

This will have to be very carefully managed so as

to avoid the possibility of terminal damage to the existing town centre if footfall reduces rather than increases.

On top of all these considerations, what happens to Piries Place, when Waitrose moves to its new location, will be important.

At the moment, the future use of what will be the redundant Waitrose store is unclear but it seems fairly obvious that a sensible use for the unit needs to be found, if it hasn't been already, without delay.

The changes, which are happening in and around our town centre, are immense and we also have the totally unknown consequences of what might happen with the proposed redevelopment

of the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant.

It all has to be looked at as one project. If we get it right, the residents of Horsham will look back in 20 years' time and say, 'job well done'.

If we get it wrong, Horsham could easily become a town that people choose to avoid.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town.

It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 261640.

Following the successful refurbishment of East Street in Horsham, the enhancement of West Street is close to completion and not too unexpectedly has received mixed reviews.

Some people like it, some hate it whilst others think that it was all a waste of money.

However, whatever