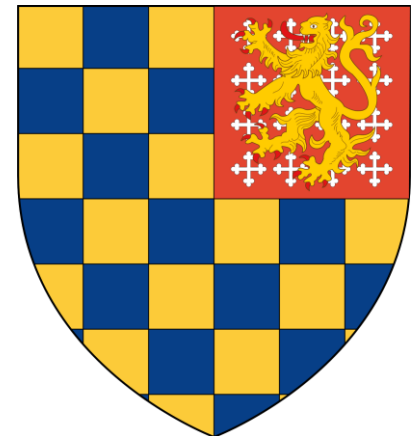


# Lewes. A special town

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KEEPING OUR TOWN SPECIAL



# The county town of East Sussex is in a stunning downland setting.

- A traditional market town and centre of communications
- In 1264 it was the site of the Battle of Lewes
- Located in the South Downs National Park





# South Downs National Park



Offham Chalk Pit information board funded by Friends of Lewes in cooperation with the SDNP

# Over 500 Listed Buildings

## Dial House, Eastgate

- Originally constructed around 1740, the building is named for the distinctive sundial on its exterior. Dated 1824 and restored in 2009, the metal sundial carries the motto 'Nosce Teipsum,' which translates as 'Know thyself.'
- The building, which was initially a residential property, housed a Quaker school for young women in 1826.





Distinctive streetscapes need protection to maintain their identity for current and future generations.

# Lewes Heritage Open Days 12-14 September 2025



**1 Lewes Victoria Hospital** (Nevill Road) The Lewes Dispensary (1847, later a bank, now Gail's Bakery) moved to this Queen Anne-style building in 1909. Now a community hospital offering a wide range of healthcare services.  
Tours Saturday, 10am to 2.30pm, must book, max 6 people each tour



**4 Park Road** This 1961 house (by Lewes architectural practice John Schwedt & Partners) has a first-storey addition designed by the present owner Jayan Brewis.  
Open Sunday, 10am to 3pm



**The Round House** (Pipe Passage) Brick and flint base of an 1802 corn windmill, converted into a private house, briefly owned by Virginia and Leonard Woolf. Ground floor open with displays of historic material.  
Open Saturday, 2pm to 5pm



**Freemasons Hall** (149 High Street) Grade II 1868 building still owned by the South Saxon Lodge, one of the oldest in Sussex. Built on the remains of the medieval Westgate tower. First floor temple.  
Open Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 4pm



**Bull House** (92 High Street) 15th century timber-framed house, once lived in by Thomas Paine, author of The Rights of Man and a key influence in the American War of Independence. Talks on the building's history each day at midday.  
Open Friday to Sunday, 11am to 3pm



**Edward Reeves** (159 High Street) Historic photographic studio and special effects workshop. Open Sunday, 11am-4pm, plus historic talks in windows around town. Nearby (164 High Street) Timbered 18th century basement jewellery workshop with historic displays.  
Friday and Saturday, 9.30am-5pm



**Hugh Roe** (74/75 High Street) Part 14th century, one of the town's oldest buildings, now featuring a textile museum. Explore its complex history and past uses as a haberdashers and men's outfitters, plus the history of the Clothkits business in Lewes.  
Tours Friday, 11am, 1pm and 3pm, must book, max 8 people



**Jireh Chapel** (Malling Street) Grade I listed chapel dating from 1805, enlarged in 1827, and still in regular use. The simple interior has galleries with corner staircases, plastered vault ceiling, octagonal pulpit and pine box-pews.  
Open Friday and Saturday, tours every half hour 10am to midday, no booking needed



**Lewes Little Theatre** (Lancaster Street) First formed in 1929 as the Lewes Players, the present theatre (since expanded) was converted from a chapel in the late 1930s with the support of John Maynard Keynes. Display about its history in the foyer, plus backstage tours.  
Open Saturday, 11am to 4pm



**W F Bruce** (5 North Street) Lewes was home to several fine clockmakers in the 18th and 19th centuries. Visit the historic basement workshop where specialist clock restoration and conservation is undertaken.  
Open Friday and Saturday, 10am to 4pm



**Crown Court** (High Street) First designed as the County Hall in 1812, with neo-classical facade in Portland stone and Coade-stone figures of Wisdom, Justice and Mercy. Panelled 19th century court rooms.  
Open Saturday, 10am to 2.30pm



**Trinity House** (213 High Street) Georgian framed building with Georgian facade and mathematical tiles. Once the town hall, now the home of the local commander in the Royal Air Force.  
Tours Saturday, 10.30am and 1.30pm, max 15 people



**Quaker Meeting House** (Friars Walk, entrance in Styles Way) Grade II listed, dating from 1784 with later additions. Original room for Quaker worship remains, with other parts extended and refurbished in 2022-24.  
Open Saturday, 10am to 4pm



**Eastgate Baptist Church** (Eastgate Street) An earlier meeting house was replaced by the present Norman-style church in 1843. Sunken baptistry below the altar, galleries first floor and helical tower staircase which spirals in two directions.  
Open Saturday, 10am to 3pm, refreshments



**Harveys** (off Cliffe High Street) is the oldest independent brewery in Sussex and its distinctive Victorian tower is a local landmark.  
Tour Sunday midday, must book, max 25 people, meet outside Harveys shop in Cliffe High Street



**St Thomas à Becket Church** (Cliffe High Street) Grade II\*, probably founded as a chapel soon after the martyr's death in 1170. 14th century nave arcade and 15th century tower. 1670 clock by Ditchling blacksmith James Loder.  
Tours Friday and Saturday, 11.30am, must book, max 12 people



**Lamb House** (3 Chapel Hill) Grade II\* listed. A chance to see the 18th century Chinese lacquer screen rediscovered in the house in the 1960s and restored by English Heritage.  
Open Sunday, 2pm to 5pm



**Priory School Chapel** (Maunder Road) Between Priory School and East Street. War memorial chapel (1960) by English architect designed Guildford Cathedral and other churches. Organ music and bell ringers.  
Open Sunday, 1 to 5pm. Parking

For venues where you need to book, scan the QR code above the map, go to [friends-of-lewes.org.uk/hod2025/](https://friends-of-lewes.org.uk/hod2025/) or search on the national Heritage Open Days website [heritageopendays.org.uk](https://heritageopendays.org.uk)

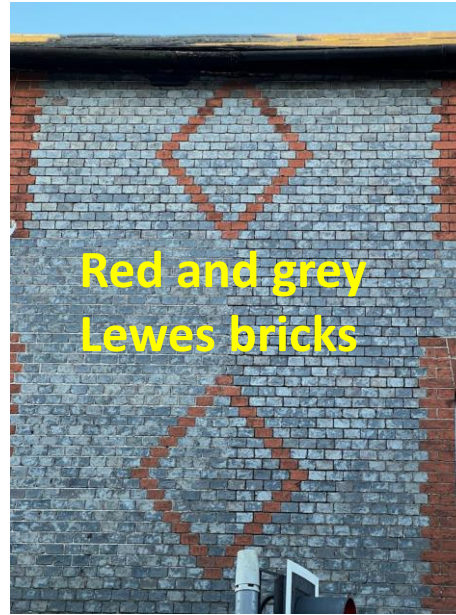
## A wealth of distinctive architecture, accessible in September each year during the Heritage Open Days weekend.

# A wealth of distinctive building materials

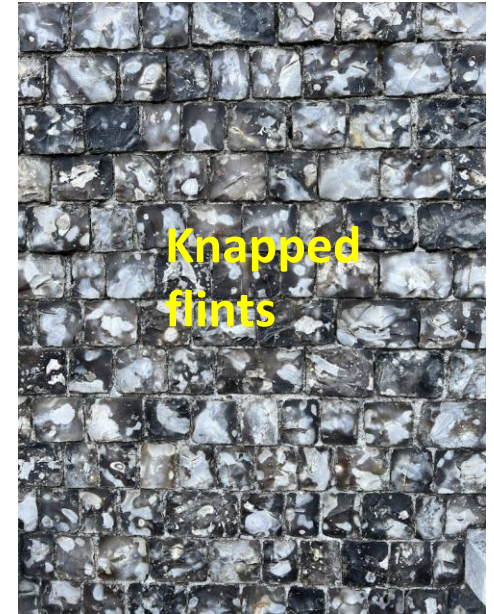
Mathematical tiles



Red and grey  
Lewes bricks



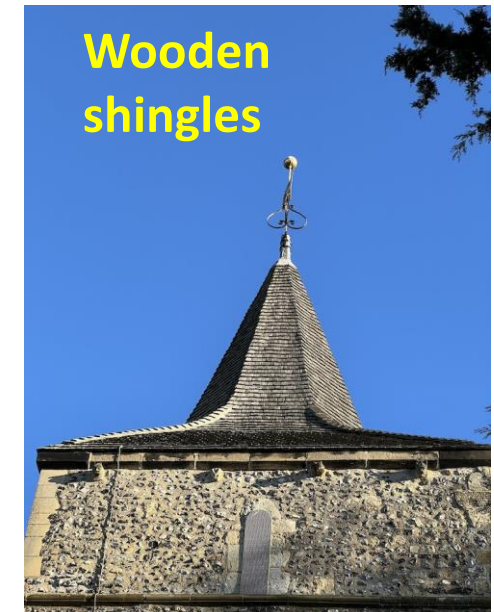
Knapped  
flints



Wall-hung slates



Wooden  
shingles





## Friends of Lewes Caring for the Heritage, Environment and Future of our town

'Our mission is to conserve, protect and enhance important aspects of the town: its history, buildings and environment. Founded in 1952, we now have over 400 members. We arrange the Heritage Open Days, check all local planning applications, maintain an informative website, organise regular talks and set strategic goals.'

# Friends of Lewes Goals

To bring further benefits to the town by placing increased emphasis on influencing relevant policy makers at national, regional and local levels.

To work with others to promote and protect the vitality of businesses in and around our High Street and preserve and enhance the community buildings within the town of Lewes.

To preserve the integrity of the Conservation Areas in Lewes through our vigilance and close liaison with local planning authorities.

To protect our environment for future generations by encouraging sustainability and the building of climate resilience, whilst adapting to the requirements of a low carbon future.

To increase tree canopy cover in Lewes, from the current 11.5% to the minimum recommendation for urban environments of 20%.

To improve our environment, increase biodiversity and mitigate the risks resulting from climate change.

To understand and to seek support for our local efforts, by engaging more broadly with other civic societies and Civic Voice.

To increase our engagement with FoL Members and the local community so that FoL priorities reflect local concerns and that members are kept informed of FoL initiatives.

# Friends of Lewes have published many books and documents

## WHEN SKIES WERE ALWAYS BLUE

Memories of  
a Lewes boyhood

W.F. Wells

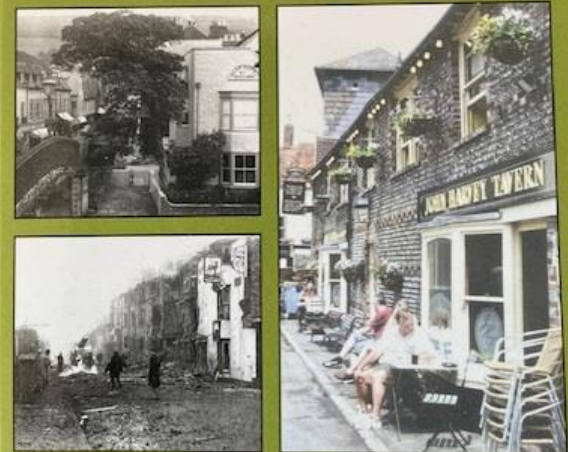
## LEWES IN DETAIL *an artist's view*



Marietta Van Dyck



## THE INNS OF LEWES past and present



# Planning

- The Friends of Lewes Planning Committee meets monthly to consider all planning applications in Lewes and the immediate surrounding area.
- The Committee's decisions are available on our website.





We participated in  
creating the Lewes  
Neighbourhood  
Plan

After years of lobbying by the Friends of Lewes, East Sussex County Council Highways improved the brick pavements in St Andrew's Lane.





We have supported a 20mph speed limit in the town centre and estates

Lewes Castle  
Bowling Green wall.  
Built by public  
subscription to  
commemorate the  
Silver Jubilee of  
Queen Elizabeth II.

Friends of Lewes  
1977





## Wall and gate of Southover Grange

The wall and gate was a Friends of Lewes project in 1993.

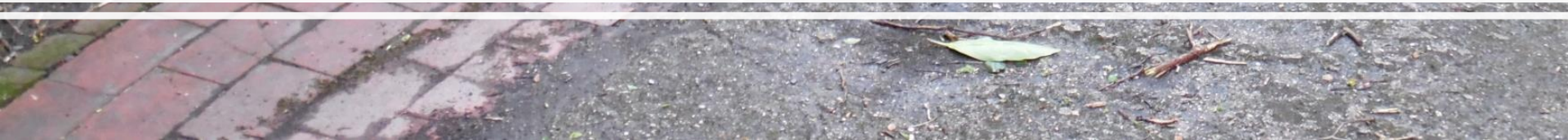
It was made possible by the support of English Heritage and the Civic Trust as well as the County, District and Town Councils and the many friends of the late John Schwerdt, architect and advocate for our Civic Society.



In 2019, Friends of Lewes managed the restoration of the dilapidated Garden of Peace in the Castle Precincts: seen here in 1919...



...and here, badly damaged, in 2017





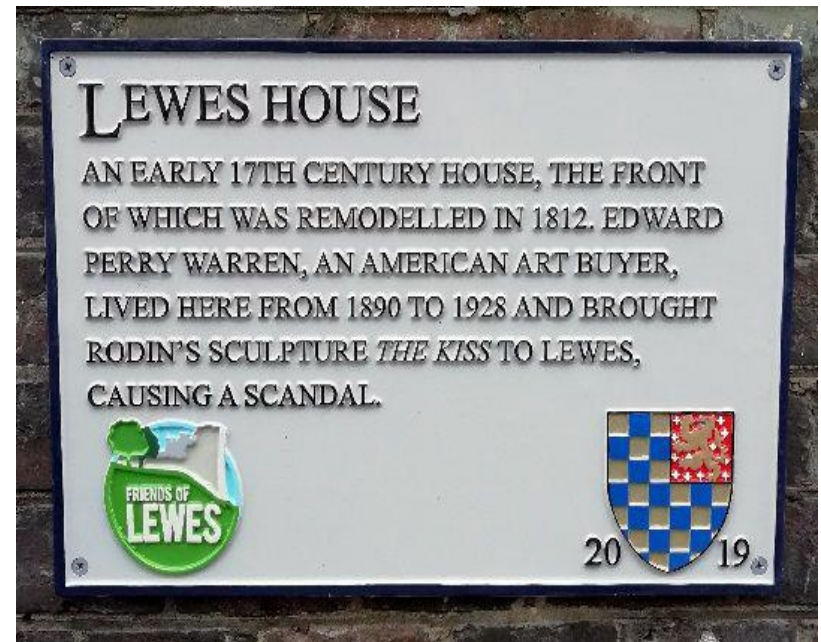
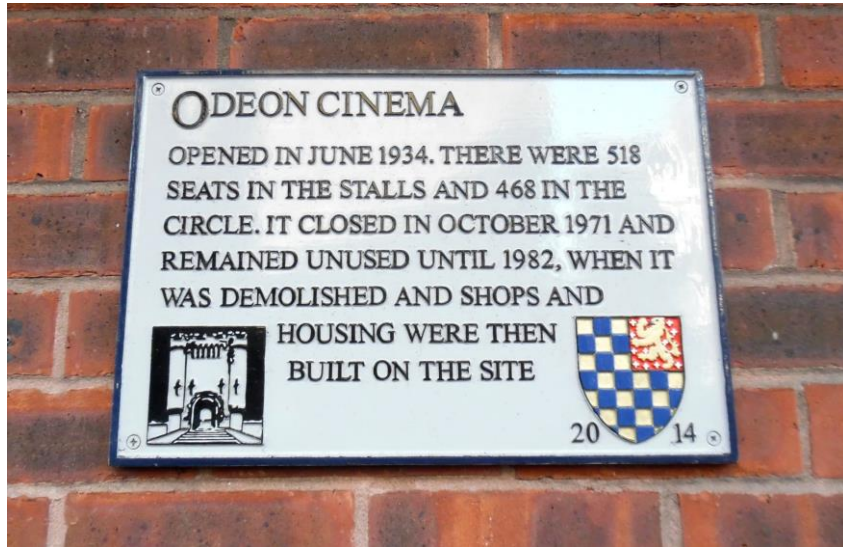


We advised the District Council on suitable safety fencing around the Winterbourne in Grange Gardens...



...and more  
appropriate  
streetlights in  
the Conservation  
Area

In partnership with Lewes Town Council,  
we place historic plaques around the town.



In 2019 Friends of Lewes paid for the revision of town maps for visitors and the District Council produced them.



## Westgate's White Lion

- Represents the former White Lion pub and is attached to the old town wall on Westgate Street, Lewes.
- Friends of Lewes arranged for the refurbishment of the original statue and its relocation to the Town Hall Corn Exchange.



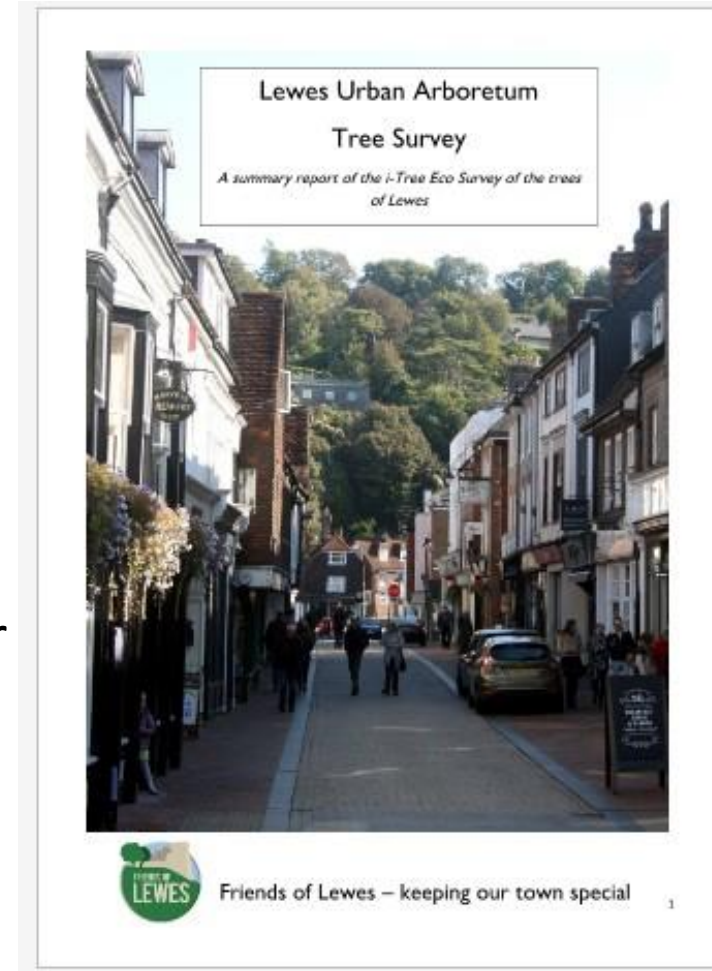
# Lewes Urban Arboretum

## Friends of Lewes Trees Committee

The Trees Committee and volunteers carried out an i-Tree Eco survey of the tree canopy in Lewes that informs our goal:

‘To increase tree canopy cover in Lewes, from the current 11.5% to the minimum recommendation for urban environments of 20%. We will do this by building on our successful projects to date and supporting other local groups with similar aims.’

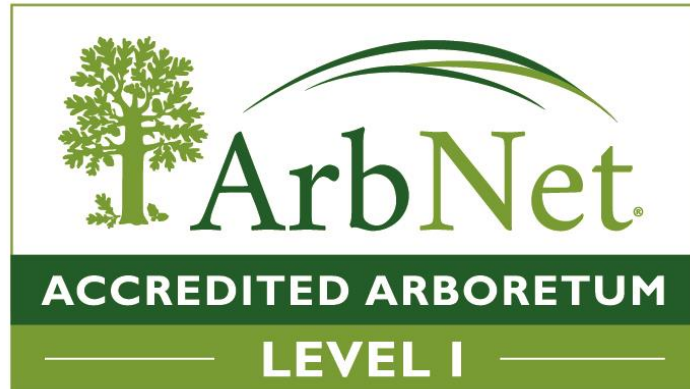
A summary of the survey report is published on our website.



## Tree planting

Since 2012 the Trees Committee has planted, and looked after, 326 trees and over 2,000 hedgerow whips in the verges and open spaces of Lewes. Visit the Friends of Lewes website to see a map showing where all the trees have been planted.





To date, the Trees Committee has planted 69 different tree species. This achievement, along with their regular guided walks and community events, led to a successful application to the international ArbNet organisation for Lewes to be recognised as an Arboretum Town - one of only two in the UK.

In a joint project with ESCC and LDC, the Trees Committee was instrumental in proposing and part-funding disease-resistant elms to replace the original row of seven on St Anne's Hill.



# Wildflower Lewes

Friends of Lewes supported Wildflower Lewes through purchasing and installing three custom-made planters full of native wildflowers as part of the High Street Pollinator Corridor project. They are situated outside School Hill Surgery.



# Lewes is a swift-friendly town

Friends of Lewes were early supporters of the swift-friendly town initiative and gave grant-funding to Lewes Swift Supporters (LSS) so that they could purchase and install an additional ten swift nest boxes in De Montfort Road. This extended an existing colony of swifts nesting there regularly and, in 2025, three of these nest boxes were visited by swifts. After a Friends of Lewes talk by Paul Stevens, Hirundine Champion for Sussex Ornithological Society, they also donated two artificial house martin nest cups to LSS.



# Lewes Climate Hub

Friends of Lewes was one of the earliest partner groups of Lewes Climate Hub and sponsors their monthly newsletter.



The Trees Committee has hosted several events and talks at the Hub.



# Lewes Floods

Lewes has a long history of flooding, with major floods in 2000, 1960, 1935, 1911, 1909, 1878.

Friends of Lewes collaborates with relevant agencies to mitigate the risks from future floods.



1960 Malling Street Flood

# October 2000 Flood



# Floods Exhibition 2025

To mark the 25th anniversary of the 2000 floods we held an exhibition of photos, memories, paintings and films.



# Flood exhibition feedback

Over 5000 people visited our flood exhibition.

We received nearly 200 items of feedback.

The majority of responders wanted:

- To stop unadapted building in the flood plain
- Action on blocked drains and infrastructure capacity
- More nature-based and adaptive flood solutions

# Surface water flooding

Friends of Lewes campaigns to get blocked drains cleared and resolve ineffective sewer utilisation. This is a big but avoidable problem in Lewes.



## **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

The 'Storing the Storm' project is run by the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust, with support from Friends of Lewes, and funded by Lewes District Council. It aims to slow the flow of water entering the surface drains by capturing and storing rainfall.



# Wallands Primary School Rainscape (SuDS)

## Objectives

- Showcase SuDS in order to promote greater take-up
- Promote sustainable water management to protect the Brighton chalk block aquifer
- Reduce flood risk
- Create a high quality and beautiful outdoor space in the school
- Involve pupils in designing and implementing changes within their school
- Increase opportunities for cross-curricular outdoor education and outdoor play
- Increase biodiversity
- Educate pupils and the wider community about water issues



Concept (credit Robert Bray Associates)

Before



Supported by Friends of Lewes to reduce local flooding

**LOCAL INITIATIVES**  
The Aquifer Partnership (TAP)  
Wallands Primary School Rainscape, Lewes



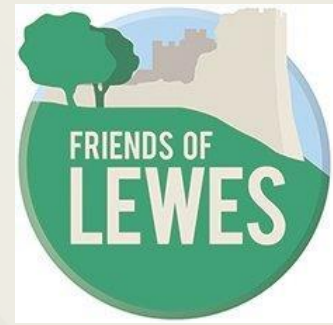
After



After



We hope you've enjoyed our presentation and that you now have a better insight into our activities and goals



You can help to protect and enhance Lewes simply by being a member of Friends of Lewes.

You can influence how your town develops by becoming more involved.

You will receive regular planning reports and quarterly newsletters. We organise talks both in person and via Zoom. Our website is a mine of local information.

If you would like to join Friends of Lewes, membership forms are available today, or you can join via our website.