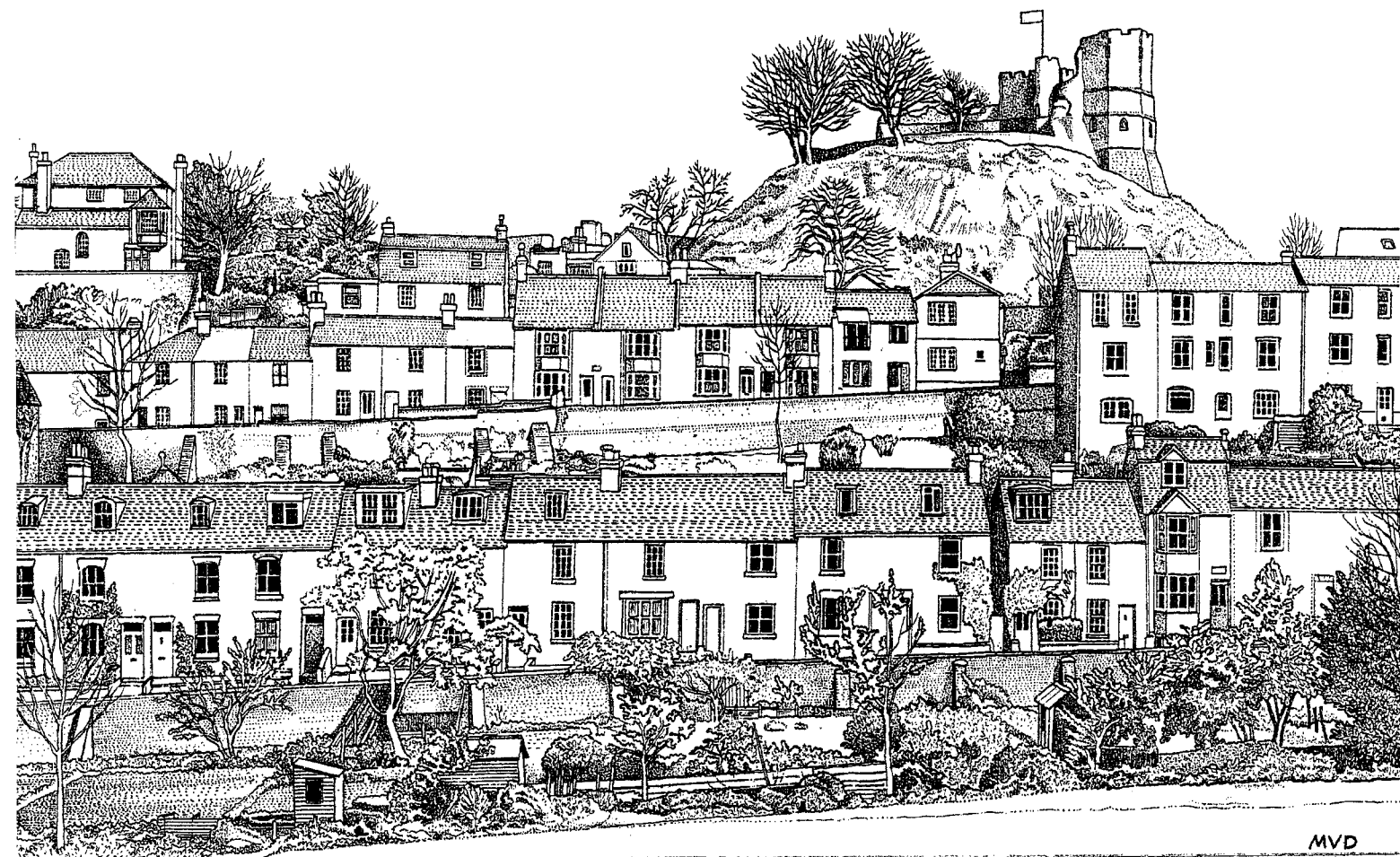


Friends of Lewes Annual Report 2006



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Friends of Lewes - the Lewes Civic Society is an unincorporated association affiliated to the Civic Trust whose constitution was last amended in March 1997. It is a registered charity (No 258756) usually known as the Friends of Lewes but referred to in this report as the Society. Communications to it should be addressed to Lewes Town Council Offices, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2QS. Membership is open to all on payment of the relevant subscription.

Members of the Society's Executive Committee, who are elected at an Annual General Meeting, are the charity trustees. Officers are elected for one year whilst half of the other members retire each year but are eligible for re-election. The trustees in office on 31st December 2006 are listed opposite; they all served for the full year except Betty Lewis, who was appointed on 12th May; Anthony Dicks on 17th July; and James Daly and Jonathan Gunson, both on 26th September. In addition Joy Preston and Elisabeth Howard served as trustees until 30th March. The Executive Committee, which meets monthly, manage the Society's affairs but annually appoint a Planning Sub-Committee that examines all planning applications affecting Lewes and the surrounding area and a Society Sub-Committee that provides services for members. On 30th March Mrs Phyllida Stewart-Roberts was appointed as a Vice-President.

The Society had a membership of 507 at 31st December 2006 (542 - 2005). The Charities Aid Foundation holds the Society's liquid assets. Its accounts are examined by Clifton Page Wood, Chartered Accountants of 11a Gildredge Road, Eastbourne BN21 4RB. The Society employs no staff and has not incurred fees from professional advisers during the year.

On 31st December 2006 the Society's representatives on the following external bodies were: -

Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies	Peter Mettyear
Lewes District Council's Planning Service Users Group	Robert Cheesman
South Downs Campaign	Robert Cheesman and Paul Millmore

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Society's objectives are to stimulate public interest in the beauty, history and character of the town of Lewes and its surrounding area; to organise concerted action for protecting and enhancing the townscape of Lewes and the architectural, visual and historic interest of Lewes and the surrounding area and for preserving free access to the latter; and to co-operate with kindred societies. It does so by arranging meetings for members on conservation issues; lobbying relevant bodies to protect the historic environment of Lewes whilst recognising that the town needs to remain an economically vibrant place, and by supporting projects that fall within its objectives.

THE FRIENDS OF LEWES - THE LEWES CIVIC SOCIETY
Lewes Town Council Offices, Town Hall, High Street, Lewes,
East Sussex BN7 2QS (Registered Charity No 258756)
www.friends-of-lewes.org.uk

Personnel at 31st December 2006

President		Peter Mettyear
Vice-Presidents	Norman Baker MP	James Franks
	Joanna Hallett (since dec'd)	Phyllida Stewart-Roberts

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Officers	Chairman	Robert Cheesman
	Vice-Chairman	David Hutchinson
	Secretary	Vacant
	Treasurer	David Tufnell
Elected members	At 2005 AGM	At 2006 AGM
	Roger Beasley	Katharine Clark
	Paul Millmore	Edward Gibbs
	Patricia Sexton	Ruth O'Keeffe
		Frances Tufnell
Co-opted Members	James Daly	Anthony Dicks
	Jonathan Gunson	Betty Lewis
Minute Secretary	Brigid Wells	

The Mayor of Lewes has the right to attend Executive Committee meetings.

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

SOCIETY SUB-COMMITTEE

* indicates member of Executive Committee

Frances Tufnell (Chairman) *
Carolyn Beckingham
Raymond Brownell
Michael de St Croix
Helen Grogan
John Kennett
Betty Lewis *
Joy Preston

Patricia Sexton (Chairman) *
Angela Blyth
Edward Gibbs *
Peter Hammond
Marietta van Dyck

Membership Secretary

Marietta van Dyck

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

The Society continues to take a close interest in all matters affecting the townscape of Lewes and its immediate surrounding area both by critically examining and commenting on the many policy documents that are produced by public bodies, as well as on all planning applications affecting this area. However it has not been able to stimulate public interest in environmental or historical matters as much as it would have liked partly because the human resources available to organise such events have been very limited. The year has been one where the Society has had to function without a Secretary but on the other hand there have been four new members of the Executive Committee. Grateful thanks are due to all those who undertake voluntary work on behalf of the Society whilst the work of Joy Preston, who retired from the Executive Committee but remains on the Planning Sub-Committee, and Elisabeth Howard, who died in April, is particularly recognised. The possibility of providing a memorial to commemorate Elisabeth's work remains under consideration.

Regular meetings take place with the local Councils and other public bodies as well as with Norman Baker MP to pursue the various issues mentioned below.

PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

Once again the number of consultations by public bodies about planning policy issues has risen and, although every effort is made to ensure that these are properly considered, an element of consultation fatigue arose when several took place at the same time and the timescale for responses was very short.

The Society's comments last year to the South East England Regional Assembly on their draft South East regional plan resulted in some changes being made before the plan was submitted to Government for consideration. However most of the Society's comments had to be repeated in the formal Government consultation in the summer. These resulted in the Society being invited to the examination in public in January 2007 on that part of the Plan concerned with policies for the proposed Sussex Coast sub-region. At this examination, where we will share our seat with the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies, our argument will be that Lewes should not be included in a coastal sub-region, in which increased development is envisaged, when it does not have the greenfield sites for such development, whilst its links with the Wealden area to the north are as strong, if not stronger, than those with the coastal area.

During the year the South Downs Joint Committee, which is the body responsible for the Sussex Downs and East Hampshire Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB's), produced a draft Management Plan. The Society welcomed the document, as it will doubtless form a template for a future National Park Authority if one is established. However it was concerned that much of the plan was very general and

really more like a strategy than a management plan. It also felt that, archaeology apart, there was little emphasis on cultural heritage whilst little account had been taken of the urban settlements, like Lewes, which are on the fringes of the AONB. Progress on the establishment of a National Park for the South Downs was held up by a legal challenge made by a landowner in the New Forest National Park which the Government wished to resolve before considering how to progress the Inspector's report into the proposed South Downs National Park.

Lewes District Council (LDC) continued with drafting their local development framework, in particular the core strategy preferred options that will form part of it. Although the Society agreed with most of these draft options it had a number of concerns. These were that little emphasis had been placed on sustainability. In addition there was an inconsistency between encouraging biodiversity on brown field sites whilst also making them a preferred option for new development. There was also no reference to Conservation Area appraisals or the management plans that will flow from them. A draft Lewes Conservation Area appraisal had been the subject of consultation earlier in the year when the Society made lengthy comments on what it considered to be a poor document. Whilst it is understood that a revised version had been prepared at the end of the year the Society had not seen it.

In connection with the Lewes Conservation Area appraisal the Society suggested that a survey of both trees and signage should be undertaken. These requests were turned down by LDC but the Society is still considering how to progress both subjects.

Paul Millmore, an executive committee member, produced a draft paper on "Local distinctiveness" which was under consideration at the end of the year. When completed it is intended that the paper should be circulated to prospective developers as an indication of the features which the Society likes to see in any proposals.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The possibility of a planning application for the proposed *Phoenix* development seemed likely for most of the year but was not submitted as Angel Properties, the developer, was undertaking necessary consultations with bodies such as the Environment Agency and English Heritage. However in late November LDC took the initiative in asking interested bodies how they would like to see the area in the future. The Society response was being considered at the end of the year but would emphasise the need for the necessary infrastructure to be in place before any re-development takes place and for the latter to be of a high standard, sympathetic to the rest of the town, incorporate sustainable principles and complement rather than compete with the existing town centre.

Work started on the former *Baxter's* site with the demolition of the former buildings and at the end of the year the archaeological dig appeared to be still in progress. There was no progress on the re-development of the adjacent *Lewes House* site and this land, which is owned by LDC, remains in an unkempt state.

During the year the *Bus Station* was sold to Rees Elliott, a local developer, but no plans for the future of this site were forthcoming by the end of the year. Such plans

would need to incorporate provision for a bus interchange as this is required by the current Lewes District Local Plan. In the meantime the commercial bus services serving Lewes stopped using the bus station because of the rent being charged and this caused difficulties at the existing bus stops which have only been partially alleviated by relocating the one at the bottom of School Hill. In addition, *Eastgate House*, the former stonemason's building opposite the bus station has also been acquired by Rees Elliott whilst it is understood that the *Wenban-Smith timberyard* behind Waitrose has been sold. In view of the proximity of these sites to the Phoenix area the Society is suggesting that LDC should also consider them in the initiative it is undertaking for the latter area.

The plans for the proposed *Police Station* on the North Street car park were withdrawn early in the year following considerable opposition to the design of the building. It is hoped that it will be significantly modified before being re-submitted as a planning application. Since this proposal would enable the Police to relinquish their West Street building, the Society endeavoured, without success, to have its façade and barrack block listed so that these important historic features are retained. Although LDC expressed some sympathy with the Society's view it will be necessary to ensure that any re-development of this site, when it is sold, respects these features.

The Environment Agency consulted the Society about their intention to build a new river wall on the east side of the river from Phoenix Causeway to the end of South Street so as to reduce the risk of *flooding in the Cliffe* area. Whilst welcoming this, the Society said that the design should harmonise with the built environment and, if possible, incorporate a riverside walk and cycleway. Separately the Environment Agency has involved the Society in their River Ouse Catchment Flood Management Plan which was still being developed at the end of the year.

EDF Energy applied to the Department of Trade and Industry for planning permission to replace the wires on their transmission line down the *Ouse Valley*. The Society objected because this line is visually very obtrusive in the AONB and it was supported in this by various other bodies. Although the Lewes District Local Plan makes the point that LDC will ensure that any replacement lines in the countryside are as unobtrusive as possible they did not object to the application. A decision by the Government was awaited at the end of the year.

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

This Committee continues to meet on the first Thursday of the month to consider all planning applications affecting Lewes. Members' comments on applications are welcome but they need to reach the Society in time for these meetings. During 2006 some 333 planning applications were considered including 6 from the County Council whilst 71 for tree works were noted. Comments were made on 61 applications but not all were objections.

Shopfront applications are considered closely particularly as regards lighting and materials. In 2006 there were a number of applications for internally illuminated fascias and hanging signs contrary to LDC's policy. The Society objected to Topps Tiles, Carpetright and Threshers, all of which were initially refused by LDC and then

modified. More recently objections were made to Lloyds Bank/TSB applications for new signage at both 8 and 82/83 High Street which have been refused. Concern was expressed about the temporary signage at the former Culverwell's building and a retrospective planning application is being sought by LDC.

Prior to this the Society had expressed some concerns about the proposed re-development of much of the Culverwell's site but although the application was approved as amended work has not yet started. Although the Society had no difficulty over the design, an objection was made to the Tesco extension application as it was considered that an independent assessment of the effect that the extended retail area would have on local shops should be made. This was subsequently commissioned by LDC and its findings will also be relevant to the Aldi application for a retail outlet in Brooks Road.

A second application for a BT telegraph pole in Abinger Place gave the society the opportunity to object and argue that telephone lines in conservation areas should be ducted underground. BT replied that this could be done if a third party met the cost.

The Society objected to both applications to demolish the flint barn in Mountfield Road as it makes a positive contribution to an indifferent street scene. The Society also objected to the initial proposals to demolish part of the Ham Lane wall to provide a secondary entrance for the Football club. Whilst that was refused subsequent proposals which took account of most of our objections, were approved.

The Society also objected to the applications for moorings in the river south of South Street because of the lack of shore facilities and the effect on the appearance of this approach to the town. Whilst the first application was refused and the appeal dismissed a further application for smaller, less obtrusive moorings was, much to our surprise and dismay, granted by LDC.

TRANSPORT ISSUES

a) EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Despite lobbying by the Society, 2006 was a year when little happened apart from revisions to the *parking scheme*. These extended it into some new parts of the town whilst also providing some 150 more parking spaces in the existing area and changing the fees payable in some locations. The scheme was plagued by considerable vandalism to the parking meters and the cost of replacing or repairing them has eliminated any surplus which might have been put towards improving the *pavements* in the conservation area.

The agreed *20mph zone* in the centre of Lewes has not yet been introduced; the Society understands that it is now being held up by the Department for Transport. However, following an exhibition in the summer, the possibility of further improvements being made in *Cliffe High Street* next year seems likely. The need for the *Station Approach bridge* to be strengthened so that buses can use it was another matter raised by the Society, as were the problems caused by the County Council's policy of not providing enhanced *street lighting fittings* in the conservation area. A

particular issue which the Society took up on behalf of a member was the damage caused by vehicles in St Pancras Road to the historic building of *Fairhall*.

b) HIGHWAYS AGENCY

Following approval by the Government work started between Southerham and Beddingham on the A 27 including the provision of a bridge across the railway at Beddingham. The work is not expected to be completed until 2008 when a two lane westbound carriageway and one lane eastbound, with improvements at both the roundabouts, will be provided. Neither the Inspector nor the Government were sympathetic to undergrounding the electricity transmission line that had been erected temporarily when the road was previously improved some 30 years ago.

The Society once again took up with Norman Baker MP the question of *by-pass noise* but despite the lobbying that has taken place, the Highways Agency remain adamant that they will not provide a low noise surface until resurfacing is required.

SOCIETY PROJECTS

The "magic circle" above Castle Ditch Lane

Lewes Town Council (LTC) and Philcox Brothers have agreed to make a contribution to the cost of this project and grants are being sought towards the balance to enable the project to go ahead.

Plaques

Details of plaques to be provided on buildings commemorating Albion Russell's first shop, the site of the first railway station, the cattle market and turkish baths, have been supplied to LTC who will be taking forward this joint venture.

Car park maps

Grants towards printing an updated version of the Society's map in the car parks and other public locations in the town were offered by LDC, LTC and Chamber of Commerce. Work on producing the revised map was in hand at the end of the year.

Books

The updated version of Les Davey's 1977 "Inns of Lewes" booklet was published in the summer thanks to the efforts of Andrew Whitnall, who edited it, and the loan of photographs from Les Davey's collection. It was sad, however, that Les died before the book was published although he was aware that the Society would be doing so.

Vision for Lewes

At its Autumn General Meeting the Society sought member's views on their vision for the future of Lewes. This was the first stage in developing a blueprint for the town which, when completed, can be put to the various Councils and other public bodies.

SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

Two General Meetings were held for Society members in 2006. At the Annual General Meeting in March, members' views were sought on the major developments likely to take place in Lewes. In September a presentation was given by John Parry on the Railway Land Wildlife Trust's work towards providing a pavilion as well as discussing the proposed "Vision for Lewes" mentioned above.

No lectures took place in 2006 but a visit to the Houses of Parliament was organised through the kind offices of Norman Baker MP. Three newsletters were provided for members to keep them abreast of Society business. These activities require volunteers to organise them which, at present, falls on to too few shoulders. Thanks are due to those who give their time in this way but offers of help to ensure these activities for members continue into the future would be much appreciated.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Society's unrestricted income last year amounted to £9,655. This includes donations to the Society in memory of the late Mr. Les Davey of £475, and Mrs. Elisabeth Howard of £95. The subscription income was slightly lower this year, which is disappointing, as we should have benefited from the increased subscription rates introduced 2 years ago, and it only just exceeded the operating costs of running the Society by £167. Total expenditure for the year amounted to £5,129, including expenses paid to trustees of £ 103, which resulted in a surplus for the year of £4,526 compared with a surplus last year of £907. This increased surplus is partly caused by the sale of books which amounted to £3,460. The Society has not yet recovered the costs of printing "Inns of Lewes". The Lewes Anniversary Book has a small deficit of £118 which may still be recovered. Despite the bad debt of £190, owed by Newlands School, there is still sufficient stock to recover the cost of the Skies are Blue book and if we do receive a partial payment for the bad debt, a surplus will have been made.

The Society's reserves have risen during the year to over £22,000 due to the increase in cash flow as past expenditure on books and tea towels was recovered. These reserves are held in a deposit account where the interest generated was £843. This reserve is retained to enable the Society to offer funding for projects which meet the Society's overall objectives, and to finance trading activities, which provide welcome additional income as well as promoting the town of Lewes. From this reserve the Society is planning to spend £8,000 on projects which include "The Linklater Pavilion", the "Magic Circle", more Town Plaques, and updating the tourist maps.

The Society is also operating a 'restricted fund' for the Lewes library project. This is in a separate deposit account where the interest this year amounted to £1,261. This fund has dropped during the year from £73,504 to £19,928, following payments made for facilities not provided by the County Council at the library. The items purchased were selected by "The Library Friends" and approved by the Society. The remaining funds will also be spent in this way as further facilities are identified.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The extent to which the Society can pursue its objectives in the future will be determined by both the human and financial resources available to it. The Society would be able to financially assist more projects which enhance the townscape of Lewes if it had larger reserves for this purpose. Such reserves could be enhanced considerably if members were to leave the Society a legacy which, bearing in mind the Society's charitable status, would reduce their inheritance tax liability.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 22nd January 2007 and signed on their behalf by

Robert Cheesman Chairman

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	2006		2005	2006
RECEIPTS	General fund unrestricted by Donors			Library Fund
<u>Voluntary Sources</u>		see note		
Subscriptions	2403.00		2,407.00	
Life Member Subscriptions	125.00		80.00	
Legacies	0.00		30.00	
Donations	1489.06	(a)	1,041.27	1,000.00
Function Income	76.46		237.02	
Grants	0.00		0.00	
Tax rebate (Gift Aid)	796.09		751.54	
SUB TOTAL:	4889.61		4,546.83	
<u>Trading Activities</u>				
Book Sales	2959.73	(b)	1090.90	
Tea towels	659.00		635.00	
Card Sales	139.00		161.00	
Poster Sales	50.00		10.00	
SUB TOTAL:	3807.73		1,896.90	
<u>Income from Assets</u>				
Interest	957.86	(c)	819.78	1,261.49
<u>Miscellaneous Receipts</u>	0.00		0.00	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	9655.20		7,263.51	2,261.49
PAYMENTS				
<u>Direct Charitable Expenditure</u>				
Project Costs	0.00		679.26	55,837.94
Function Costs	55.06		394.13	
Grants	0.00		1,150.00	
SUB TOTAL:	55.06		2223.39	
<u>Other Expenditure</u>				
Web Site Maintenance	240.00		240.00	
Insurance	135.00		135.00	
Printing & Stationery	495.07		717.21	
Post & Telephone	209.30		187.54	
Travel	11.05		0.00	
Room Hire	512.47		388.28	
AGM & Annual Report	287.75		251.75	
Subscriptions	245.00	(d)	225.00	
Independent examination costs	99.85		158.62	
SUB TOTAL:	2235.49		2,303.40	
<u>Trading Activities</u>				
Book Production	1792.17	(e)	1,811.91	
Cards bought	0.00		0.00	
Tea towels bought	820.31		0.00	
Poster Acquisition	0.00		0.00	
SUB TOTAL:	2612.48		1,811.91	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	225.64	(f)	18.00	
TOTAL PAYMENTS	5128.67		6,356.70	55,837.94
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS TO DATE	4526.53		906.81	(53,576.45)

NOTES:

- (a) includes donations in memory of Les Davey £475.00, and £95.00 for Elisabeth Howard
 - (b) Book Sales: Wells Book: £1,828 Lewes Anniversary Book: £269.65 Inns of Lewes £862
 - (c) Interest on CAF deposit account: £843.35 CAF chq. acc: £114.51.
 - (d) CPRE: £30.00, FOSAS: £25.00, Southdowns Campaign: £25.00, Civic Trust: £150.00, Living Streets £15.00
 - (e) Book Production: Wells Book: £424.79 - printing less £3.77 rebate on postage. Inns of Lewes £1,371.15
 - (f) Advert in Lewes Carnival Prog. £30, Attendance Fee for FOSAS AGM: £40.00, Publicity Stand Carrier: £60.64
- Advertisement in Chamber of Commerce Town Guide: £95.00

MONETARY ASSETS

Bank Cash Balances

GENERAL

FUNDS

unrestricted

LIBRARY

FUND

restricted

	CASH	CAF CHQ	CAF DEP	TOTAL	
BROUGHT FORWARD FROM YEAR 2005	0	251	£ 20,147	20,398	73,504
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FROM ABOVE		2,139	2,639	4,527	(53,576)
PLUS UNCLEARED CHEQUE		95		95	
BALANCES AT 31 DECEMBER 2006	0	2,234	22,786	25,020	19928

OTHER MONETARY ASSETS:

Stock in Hand at Cost	
Books	£ 1,605
Tea Towels	£ 509
Cards	£ 130
Posters	£ 673
TOTAL	£ 2,917

DEBTORS

Newlands School : £190.00 (in receivership)

LIABILITIES

NONE

PROJECT EXPENDITURE INCURRED & PROPOSED

PROJECT	98-02 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2,007 Budget	TOTAL SPENT
Town Information Maps	9,171		341			2,000	11,512
Linklater Pavilion	976					5,000	5,976
Magic Circle				294		2,000	2,294
Plaques						1,000	1,000
TOTAL	£ 10,147	£ 0	£ 341	£ 0		£ 10,000.00	