



Tonbridge Civic Society

July 2023

JULY NEWSLETTER

Chairman's note



TCS Chair
Tom Freke

It's a year since the Civic Society's Neil Edwards presented a vision of the Beales site in Tonbridge to senior management at Sainsbury's. His plans (available on the TCS website) presented a reimagining of this central part of town including a potential covered market and new public space.

Unfortunately, little has happened over the last 12 months – if you don't include some boarding that went up in recent weeks and the revealing of a ghostly Bentalls sign – and it remains an open question what the future is for that side of the High Street.

Whatever Sainsbury's decides, there is a lot of discussion happening about that area. The council has hired consultants to help it review the town centre and the assets it owns. And TMBC has published a review* that is worth a read if you want an indication of the future of the town.

The report says a decision about the Angel Centre "requires urgent consideration" and indeed there was some lively pre-election discussion among the political

parties about some potential plans. TMBC's report says that the "High Street East" area is marked as the "principal opportunity for revenue generating assets" that could help generate new funds for the council. The report also warns of the risk of lost revenue from reducing car parking spaces.

Whatever the proposals that are brought forward, the Civic Society will work to ensure that you learn about them quickly and are given the information you need to make your voice heard.

*Link to the review is here <https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s62729/Annex%201.pdf>



It was all shops in my day!

UPCOMING TCS EVENTS

Come and find us at Tonbridge Calling on July 1. It's at the Racecourse Sportsground and we'll be there through the afternoon. At the event we'll be revealing the winners of the Civic Society's photo competition. Thanks to all those that submitted entries.

And on July 29 it's the Civic Society's summer tea party and annual design award ceremony. Members should RSVP back to us soon please, and no later than July 15.



OTHER EVENTS

- Jul 1: Tonbridge Calling
- Jul 2: Second Wind Concert Band at Tonbridge Castle
- Jul 7-8: Tonbridge Music Festival
- Jul 21-23: Luna Cinema at the Castle
- Jul 29: Tonbridge Civic Society tea party and annual design awards
- Jul 30: Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Concert Band
- Aug.5: Tonbridge Pride 2023
(email tonbridgepride@gmail.com for further information or to volunteer)

A vibrant yellow poster for 'TONBRIDGE CASTLE & LOCAL VENUES 5TH AUGUST 2023 PRIDE'. It features a group photo of people wearing rainbow face paint. The poster includes social media icons for Instagram (@TONBRIDGEPRIDE) and Facebook (TONBRIDGEPRIDE23), and the website www.tonbridgepride.com. At the bottom, there are logos for partner organizations: Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Specsavers, Made Happy, Tonbridge Pride, SEK Education Consulting Group, Kent County Council, Brackets, and Saul Events.

INTRODUCING ... Artspring

Artspring is an artist-run cooperative gallery nestled at the north end of the High Street. They've supported the Civic Society's photo competition in recent weeks so I asked Antonia Graham, one of the artists involved, a few questions so as to get to know them a little better.

What's the history of Artspring...and why Tonbridge?

ArtSpring was formed by a small group of local artists in July 2016 following a group exhibition at the Tunnel Gallery in Tonbridge school. 167 High St came available to rent and a collective was formed - we are about to celebrate our 7th birthday! Past members continue to support the gallery as associate members and exhibit with us at external events, such as in Whitstable last year.



What do you think is the best thing about it?

The best thing about ArtSpring is the community of creatives (painters, printmakers, ceramicists, glass artists and jewellers) who support one another.

What are your plans for the next few months?

We are looking forward to helping judge the Tonbridge Civic Society photo competition and exhibiting the winner in the gallery. In October we will be exhibiting our work in the gallery at Trinity Theatre Tunbridge Wells and plan to host an Open Call exhibition in the new year.

How should people get in touch to learn more?

We welcome you to visit our website for more information about our artists and events, <https://artspringgallery.co.uk/>

Should you be interested in exhibiting with us, go to the Call for Artist page for links to apply.

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Charity registration 227956
info@tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk
www.tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk