



Tonbridge Civic Society

May 2023

MAY NEWSLETTER

Chair's introduction by Tom Freke



On a short walk in Tonbridge with the children enjoying some much-sought-after spring sunshine I was struck how much happens in our town. Within a short distance, there was the Teafest at the Castle, a Portuguese barbecue at Escape Arts, an inter-school competition at the athletics track and cricket matches on the Tonbridge School grounds.

I'm sure if I walked on through the Racecourse Sports-ground I'd have seen and heard so much more –kids on the miniature railway, splashing from the outdoor pool, paddlers on the Medway ... and each week there seems to be something new!

And that, I hope, will be a consistent theme for the Civic Society over the next year: recognizing and helping to join up some of the many and varied places, groups, organizations and societies that enrich our town so much. The Society has its own unique role to play – notably about planning and place – but maybe also it can provide another platform where some of the different groups in town can connect.

Meanwhile, we have the Coronation to look forward to. Flags are emerging, the bunting is up and we'll keep our fingers crossed for the weather. On May 6 there's free crafts for kids at Tonbridge library (10am-12pm) while on May 7 there's the Coronation Big Lunch at the Castle (12pm-5pm). And many streets across town will be closed for parties. Enjoy!

(And please do take photos of celebrations around the town – we may be holding some kind of competition in the coming weeks ...)



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society held its AGM last week where we said thanks to longstanding supporters of the Society. We are grateful to Mike Norrie for checking over our accounts, expertly prepared by Jeremy Hills, who is also stepping down from the committee after many years of managing memberships, finances and more.

We also took time to say a huge thank you to Diane Huntingford, our outgoing Chair, who was surprised with some thank you gifts and not-seen-before video interview she recorded a few years ago talking about Tonbridge with the passion and humour which we all appreciated so much.

Also at the AGM Mark Ansdell ran through Tonbridge Civic Society design awards from the past, and gave us a taster of what might in contention this year. Nominations have now closed and we'll be reviewing and updating you all on this in the run up to the presentation on July 29.

We were also joined by Stewart Gledhill, Chair of Save Capel. He gave us a great update on where things stand with the campaign that's just over the border. We're waiting on Tunbridge Wells Borough Council after the planning inspector gave their feedback. Read more and sign up here. <https://savecapel.com/>



PLANNING

Not so busy on the planning front in recent weeks but there's plenty bubbling under.

As mentioned above, decisions on Capel are awaited from TWBC.

We are also waiting for the proposal for the River Centre Car Park to come to the council's committee and watching for updates regarding the major development on Lower Haysden Lane.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

We have two upcoming dates in the diary:

July 1 TCS will be at Tonbridge Calling

July 29 TCS summer tea party and annual design awards

Details of how to attend the Summer Tea Party will be sent to members shortly.

Also, we hope to find a date for some kind of informal event between now and July 1. If so, we'll circulate details.



Other events:

To learn more about events going on in town, do see the events page maintained by the Town Team here: <https://www.tonbridge-ourtown.org.uk/>

From that link, town highlights for May include:

May 7 Tonbridge Coronation Big Lunch at the Castle

May 13 Eurovision Final live at the Castle

May 21 Tonbridge Lions Charity & Community Group Walk

May 27 Tonbridge Food and Drink Festival at the Castle

June 9 TBUG Critical Mass Cycle Ride from Tonbridge to Tunbridge Wells



INTRODUCING

A soon-to-be regular item profiling another town society or group.

Tonbridge Music Club

Tonbridge Music Club is just one year older than the Civic Society so for many people needs little introduction, and yet I suspect many people don't know much about TMC, which brings to the town top quality musical performances throughout the year.

So I followed up with them to learn more about what they are about, and what they have coming up.

Thanks to TMC's Pat Gane and Roger Golland for their assistance.

What's the main purpose of TMC?

TMC's purpose is to enrich the musical life of the community of Tonbridge. It offers the highest level of musical events, ranging from evening performances and coffee concerts by some of the most recognised musicians on the scene today, to school-based workshops and family concerts.

By doing so, we hope to broaden the appeal of live music-making for all ages and stimulate the rewards that live music-making can bring. There's something for everyone – wonderful artists and an amazing variety of music – all on OUR doorstep.



What do you think is the best thing about it?

The atmosphere of the Club is inclusive; we wish to break down stereotypes about classical music and bring live, high-quality events suitable for all ages.

We aim to keep prices affordable. You can always buy tickets at the door but we have a discounted subscription ticket option for evening concerts, there's the popular Sunday morning Coffee Concerts, and we have a 'Totally

Toddler!' concert for little ones. Our audiences are assured fantastic music-making and a very warm welcome.

How long has TMC been around?

Tonbridge Music Club was founded in 1962 and has presented each year between October and June a season of concerts featuring world-class artists.

TMC celebrates its 60th anniversary season in 2022-23 – this special season began with a superstar performance by Alison Balsom (trumpet) and Anna Lapwood (organ) in the Chapel at Tonbridge school, choreographed by Sir Sam Mendes.

What are your plans for the next few months?

There are two concerts remaining in our current season: the Busch Trio on May 6 and the Nash Ensemble on June 24. We will announce our 2023-34 season programme in June.



We wish to develop the community profile which has become more powerful during our 60th anniversary year. We will continue high profile evening concerts, a special children's concert at EM Forster theatre and the popular Sunday morning coffee concerts.

We are continuing our successful Music Awards scheme to support young people's music-making in Tonbridge. With the reduction of music education and its funding in schools, this reaches out to support young people and broadens the appeal of live classical music in the Town.

How should people get in touch if they want to learn more?

Website: www.tmc.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/tonbridgemusicclub
Twitter: [@tmc_tonbridge](https://twitter.com/tmc_tonbridge)

Tonbridge Civic Society 2023
Charity registration 227956
info@tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk
www.tonbridgecivicsociety.org.uk