

Report for the November 2014 meeting of the Malvern Civic Society

On Friday 7 November we held the 55th Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk from Steve and Fiona Peet about their house near the Wyche Cutting, which won the Civic Society Award in 2012.

President Dudley Brook thanked everyone, particularly those on the various committees, who had helped ensure that the Civic Society continued its functions so well. Chairman Clive Hooper covered the election of Officers and Executive Committee members and advised that three people were stepping down from the Committee; their service had been much appreciated. Vice-Chairman Tim Gunter, whose notable contribution to the work of the Society was widely recognised, was also relinquishing his role after nine years of dedicated service. Clive encouraged members to volunteer their time to help with our projects. Of some urgency is that we find a suitable person to be coordinator for the fundraising programme for The Friends of Malvern's Railways Group. Finally, Clive expressed gratitude for all the support he had received as Chairman over the past year and gave his report, the details of which are available in the Annual Report. Hon. Treasurer Andrew Huntley gave his report and confirmed that we had balanced our budget, full details of which were circulated. He reminded us that annual membership subscriptions are now due.

For the last twenty years the Civic Society has awarded a plaque for a new or renovated built environment that has added something to the community. The transformation of this early Victorian building that Steve and Fiona Peet had created makes full use of its site and incorporates the very latest technology. Thrilled and delighted to be awarded this plaque, the owners proceeded to give us an illustrated tour of what the house looked like originally and the various stages they had taken it through. The house was originally built around 1897 and in the 1970s it had been extended and split into two flats. Having bought one of the flats, the Peets subsequently purchased the remaining one six months later in 2006 when it became available. In order to make the transformation successful, much carefully considered design work, along with fitting and attractive materials, had achieved that goal. A great deal of work was put in by the Peets and their contracted companies.

They spent many years considering and planning the renovation, taking inspiration from Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1957), an American who was the pioneer of organic architecture. He was innovative and forward-thinking and typically said "hill and house should live together"; this was an ideal source of inspiration for such a project located in the Malvern Hills. The Peets' aim was to make the house part of its surroundings, ensuring it was as ecological as possible and reducing its carbon footprint. The structure and materials used for the transformed building, in addition to its heating and lighting methods, such as air circulating, a wood-burning stove and LED lighting, all contributed to gaining an 'A' rating in an Energy Performance Certificate. The project also gained a further award, this time from the South Worcestershire Building Control, for the best domestic conversion/extension. A huge amount of work had been put into what was a real labour of love, which they had thoroughly enjoyed accomplishing.