

## Phoenix Project Update

---

Dear Friends & Neighbours,

Many of you will be aware of the purchase of the North St/Phoenix site by Human Nature (Places). The news was announced in December and we thought it was time to write to introduce ourselves and let you know how you can follow, and become involved in the work we're planning to do, as it progresses over the coming months. This email invites you to sign up to a 'Phoenix Project' newsletter - email us at: [info@humannature-places.com](mailto:info@humannature-places.com). It also contains information on immediate local employment opportunities at Human Nature.

We would be very grateful if you could share this email with your friends and colleagues in and around Lewes.

### Moving forward rapidly

We are currently completing due diligence on the land titles and expect to take ownership of the sites at North Street in February. We intend to move forward rapidly, re-design the scheme and submit a new planning application in early 2022. Our commitment is to a super-green new neighbourhood which will of course include flood defences, new facilities for the town's GPs and associated care services in a Health Hub. We will build a new bridge, a substantial number of homes (from market housing through to social rented), community, creative, cultural and youth facilities, and a variety of commercial and business spaces. It will be a low traffic neighbourhood that prioritises pedestrians, cyclists and EV movement which will be stitched into the town for ease of accessibility and connection. We hope it can help catalyse a shift to cleaner air and safer and easier pedestrian movement across the town centre and beyond.

For us, development is not simply road layouts and bricks and mortar - the physical fabric - that's the (relatively) easy part. Good development is about values and principles to do with the greatest challenges and opportunities facing our world today

- for instance, how do you design a place to help mitigate and adapt to a climate emergency? What do we do differently? What are the innovative ways to finance affordable homes? How do we rebuild our economy while regenerating habitats and ecosystems? We must and will bend investment to these values, financing and otherwise enabling housing choice, creating a mixed-use and mixed income neighbourhood, and all the while deploying the spending power of the capital project and the future households to bring new energy, resources and vigour to the Lewes and district local economy. This new place will be one where people of all ages and incomes can live peacefully and healthily in a supportive and neighbourly community, work productively and sustainably, and play happily, all in close proximity: it will be what thoughtful city leaders around the world are calling a '10-minute neighbourhood'.

We will apply circular economy principles; use high quality, low impact sustainable materials (with construction, assembly and finishes by local builders and makers wherever possible); connect via a local grid to renewable power and heat supply; enable accessibility and carbon-free movement; provide housing choice in terms of price, tenure and type; and build and manage adaptable workspaces for entrepreneurs of all kinds. These things are not add-ons for us, they represent Human Nature's core philosophy; we simply will not build in any other way.

The open market competition for the sites has meant that we are paying a full commercial price for the land. Moreover, the infrastructure here will be expensive as we address flooding, historic contamination and difficult ground conditions, levels and gradients. We need to fix things for the long term. And you will rightly expect us to build beautifully.

All of this is only possible if we demonstrate that investment in places, designed and built well to stand the test of time and grounded in the principles of social and environmental sustainability, can be achieved in economically sound ways. We aim for

## Phoenix Project Update

---

profitability so that investors can see the sense in making these kinds of investments here and elsewhere alongside well-judged public and social investments and programmes. We will be open with you about the economics of the scheme so you can see and indeed influence where the money goes. The Phoenix Project could become a replicable exemplar for future projects throughout the UK. If it can't be done in Lewes...

It will take all of us - the whole town - to deliver this new neighbourhood and do something remarkable, just as the people who built the castle, Lewes High Street, the Pells, Depot and other extraordinary parts of the town did so in their day. We believe in and indeed are experienced in meaningful engagement and collaboration. This will involve opportunities for all in the Lewes communities, not just those from the established and most vociferous groups - and including current tenants and immediate neighbours - to meet and work alongside the outstanding specialist engineers, designers and architects we have invited to join us. This will be a transparent, professionally moderated and systematic process. We will be organising creative workshops, events and a festival over the months ahead - online as necessary until we can meet in the wonderful old-fashioned way, in person, again.

We would be delighted if you would like to receive our newsletter and get involved. You can do so by emailing us at [info@humannature-places.com](mailto:info@humannature-places.com). And do please add in any further information you might have to give whether it is specific expertise or ideas, an interest in business, work or enterprise space, or indeed a home, on the future Phoenix Project site. We will be using the newsletter to keep you up-to-date, confirm the programme of public engagement events, and elaborate in greater detail on our intentions, the plans, the precedents and the team which will deliver this project. We will also include information on meanwhile uses and pop-up events on site, while it awaits development.

Human Nature has its head office on Lewes High Street and is currently looking to fill three positions within the head office team. The job descriptions and application process is attached on this email.

It is a huge privilege and quite the responsibility to take this important project forward. We stand on the shoulders of many terrific people across the town and elsewhere who have made this opportunity possible - thank you for placing your trust in us. We can't wait to get going and hugely look forward to working with you, to overcome the many challenges and seize the fantastic opportunities, to create something we can all be proud of.

**Jonathan Smales**  
**Founder & CEO**  
**77 High Street, Lewes**  
**BN71XN**  
<https://humannature-places.com/>