



The Buckingham Society

Campaigning for a Better Buckingham

Newsletter February 2013

The Maids Moreton Road Development Appeal – David Child

Concerning Planning Inspectorate: Ref 2177458: Land to the North of Manor Park Farm, Moreton Road, MK18 1PW

After AVDC rejected Bellway Home's application for 80 dwellings to be built on Moreton Road Bellway appealed and the hearing took place from the 27th to 30th November 2012. Sadly, on 29 January the planning inspector found in favour of Bellway Homes.

But hopefully that is not the end of the story. AVDC can appeal to the High Court and are still deliberating whether to proceed with an appeal. The decision in favour of Bellway hinges heavily on the opinion of the inspector that there is a shortfall in the 5 year land supply using the figures for the entire Vale of Aylesbury of 3.1 / 2.7 years. The reason "The pressing need to identify and deliver additional housing within Aylesbury Vale as a whole outweighs the South East Regional Plan spatial strategy" means all other factors are secondary to this.



A view of the site in question

From AVDC's view The Vale of Aylesbury housing figures were allocated in 3 sections, Aylesbury where there is a shortfall in the 5 year land supply, Milton Keynes and the Rest of District where the land supply is 8.2 years.

This is a headline from The Bucks Herald of 16 February 2013 "Three years after coalition took power, Eric Pickles finally moves to revoke South East Plan which imposed 26,000 new homes on Vale (but is it too late to stop mass development in the district?)".

Had this been done last year it is expected Bellway's appeal would have failed! So there are two routes to have this decision reversed. 1. High court or 2. For Eric Pickles to "call in" this decision and hopefully decide in AVDC's favour!

We will have to wait and see the outcome.

Planning Report – Ian Orton

The decision of C.A Newmarch, the inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to uphold the appeal of Bellway Homes against the decision by AVDC to not permit the construction of 80 houses on land to the north of Manor Park Farm on Moreton Road, Buckingham, may not have been entirely unexpected. But the reasons for the decision would have surprised most interested parties.

Rather than focusing on whether or not the site was allocated for housing in the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan - which the inspector decided it wasn't - she focused instead on whether or not AVDC had a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land within the context of the South East Plan. As the latter is expected to be scrapped imminently this should have been a red-herring.

Ms Newmarch decided, otherwise, however. Notwithstanding the recently approved 700-house development at Lace Hill, and the additional pressure this places on local physical and social infrastructure, she felt that this would have only a marginal impact on a perceived shortfall of land. And because she felt the benefits of the Bellway development would significantly outweigh any adverse impact she allowed the proposal.

Our one consolation is that 80 houses will be netted from the 700 or so houses Buckingham is expected to accommodate as part of the new Vale of Aylesbury Plan.

Meanwhile Buckingham Town Council's Town Planning Committee has decided to oppose the application for redevelopment of the former Chandos Cinema site, for a variety of reasons ranging from poor design, traffic concerns and potential problems with underground springs.



The Chandos Road Cinema in 1938 in it's prime - Image taken from a postcard recently on sale on Ebay



The same scene today

Green Spaces – Ted Farmer

With just about everything dormant - except the weather - there is little to report on at this time of year but at least the spaces are green again - but saturated or flooded. However one topic has required attention.

The Planning Group have been considering the impact of the proposed development of the former Chandos Cinema site on the junction of Chandos and London Roads, (described above). For many years a dominant feature of the area was a very large Copper Beech tree above the embankment on the east side of London Road. Regrettably, the tree was found to have diseased roots and in imminent danger of collapse, requiring urgent felling, which took place in 2007.

AVDC placed an obligation on the owner to plant a replacement which unfortunately was not carried out. The originally specified common Ash is now unacceptable due to Die-back disease and there are differences of opinion on the best choice from a shortlist for the very prominent location for planting before the end of March.

Stop Press: We have just heard that the tree is to be replaced before the end of March, hopefully with a hornbeam. Well done for your persistence Ted.

Destination Buckingham Group (DBG) – David Peevers

The Destination Buckingham Group was set up last year to promote Buckingham as a good place to live, work and visit. The Buckingham Society was one of the founder members of this group which also includes Buckingham Town Council, the town's traders, Buckingham Business Club and the university. AVDC generously provides funding from its marketing budget. David Peevers represents the society on the steering group.

At a public seminar attended by David in November, the national organisation Action for Market Towns (AMT), praised Buckingham for pioneering this 'town team' concept. AMT subsequently did an audit of Buckingham and on most measurements (vacant shops, mix of shops and services) Buckingham performed better than most towns of a similar size.

Destination Buckingham is now working on a programme of events for 2013, starting with the extremely successful Food Fair held in February.

Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan – John Wilkins

The Buckingham Society continues to play an important role in the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan that will meet the needs and desires of Buckingham and those who work and live in the town.

In late November, a second well-attended public meeting of 2012 enabled the Society to identify four keys areas of the Plan that are receiving widespread public support. These are

- a belief that house building, at least in the first ten years of the Plan, should focus on smaller, brownfield sites within the ring road and not in the floodplain
- an essential requirement that a thriving town must have a viable, successful and popular town centre that utilises fully vacant sites and provides adequate car parking
- a recognition that Buckingham, as it develops further, must extend its existing green spaces and its paths and cycleways
- an unavoidable necessity to improve access and reduce traffic congestion and impact by building an A421 Relief Road to bypass the Bypass

We continue to promote these elements of the Plan.



Picture supplied by Ian Orton

The forthcoming weeks will see renewed Council publicity and consultation about the Neighbourhood Plan and all members are urged to participate and contribute wherever possible. Of note are a Stakeholders' Meeting focusing on the Town Centre held on 22 February and a University event, for school and university students and staff, on 6 March.

Look out for further information through Society and Council Newsletters and in the Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser.

The picture to the right shows part of the Buckingham arm of the former Grand Junction Canal. Could this form part of a new "Buckingham Linear Park" under the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Local Crime issues Survey

Between Monday 11th February and Tuesday 5th March 2013, the Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership (a statutory body including the police, fire service and local councils) will be conducting a Local Crime Issues Survey in a number of wards in Aylesbury Vale - and the Buckingham North Ward is one the areas involved. The partnership is keen to hear about the crime and anti-social issues that may concern people and findings from the survey will help set the partnership's crime prevention campaigns in 2013/14.

People can complete the survey by going on-line to www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/ and then navigate to the 'Have Your Say' section at the bottom of the home page and click on 'Local Crime Issues Survey' which will take them direct to a short questionnaire (taking about 10 minutes to complete).

Alternatively, If people would prefer to complete a paper questionnaire, they should contact Community Safety, Aylesbury Vale District Council on telephone 01296-585014 or email agarside@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk who will arrange to send a questionnaire, a covering letter and a return freepost self seal envelope.

All completed questionnaires will be entered in to a free prize draw to win a £50 Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) voucher - the ATG theatres include Aylesbury's Waterside Theatre. The draw will take place in March with the winner notified direct. Results of the survey will be published on the AVDC website in April.

Bid to Make the Vacant Focus Site an ASDA Food Store

In the last newsletter we reported that representatives of the ASDA development team had consulted about plans for the new store. We have just heard that the Planning application has been submitted.

Dates for Your Diary

- 1 The Next Executive meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th March at 5.00 pm at The Villiers Hotel.
- 2 We will be holding hustings for the County Council elections which are to be held on 2nd May 2013. More information to follow.
- 3 Celebration of Civic Day 22nd June 10.00-2.00.
 - a. Music from local musicians in the front of The Old Gaol
 - b. Coffee, tea and cakes
 - c. John Bercow is to open the event and present awards
 - d. An opportunity to contribute to The Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan
 - e. "Civic Buckingham" Tours lead by Ed Grimsdale
- 4 Lecture followed by garden party at Walnut Yard 17th July.
- 5 Heritage Open Days 12-15th September

We would like to hear from you

Please give us some feedback - tell us what you would like to read in this newsletter and what activities should The Buckingham Society prioritise that we currently do not. Comments to kathyrobins@walnutyard.co.uk

If you would like to be involved in any of our activities or attend a meeting of the executive committee, then please contact us or just come along. Dates of meetings and contact details of committee members are on the website www.buckinghamssociety.org.uk

We save money by using email rather than printing and posting. Please let Gill Jones gill@e-jones.net know your email address if you still receive your Newsletter by post.

We are seeking a minutes secretary for executive committee meetings, if you would like to help please let us know.