

Newsletter December 2013



The Buckingham Society
Campaigning for a Better Buckingham



A merry Christmas to all of our members. I hope that you all enjoy the festivities and have a happy and successful 2014.



The AGM

36 people attended the AGM on Tuesday 12th November 2013. The current executive group were re-elected and Belinda Morley Fletcher was welcomed as the new Minutes Secretary. Minutes of the meeting are attached.

Executive Committee:

Kathy Robins	Chair
Tony Mayston	Treasurer
Belinda Morley-Fletcher	Secretary
Gill Jones	Membership Secretary
Ian Orton	Planning
Ted Farmer	Green Spaces
Ed Grimsdale	Planning and society historian
Roger Edwards	Destination Buckingham and Civic Day
Alistair Alcock	University representative
Nigel Morrison	Currently no portfolio
Carolyn Cumming	Planning

The meeting noted that highlights of the year were the Hustings for the County Council Elections, the celebration of Civic Day and our contribution towards the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan.



Following the meeting David Hudson, Head Teacher of The Royal Latin School, pictured left, described the “600 Campaign”. It was launched to raise funds for vital improvements to the school site as well as some exciting new additions. The work should be finished in time for the school’s 600th anniversary in 2023. The first phase, The Discovery Centre, will be an innovative 12 laboratory science and technology facility. Construction is due to begin in early 2014. The plan is to share the experience and facilities with other schools, so

that the impact reaches beyond the school gates. The Buckingham Society made a donation of £50 to the funds and a brick will be made in our name.

Buckingham's Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Plan is now available for public consultation. When completed it will be the blueprint for development in Buckingham for the next 20 years. It covers housing, employment and related infrastructure. It can be down loaded from the Town Council website www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk and there is a copy in the reference section of the library. There will be a chance to talk to Town Council representatives from 10.00-3.00 pm on Saturday January 4th at Buckingham Community Centre if you would like to make a comment or ask questions.



Our own Buckingham Society Group working on the Plan will be meeting twice in December and January to discuss the draft plan and to formulate our response. The public consultation closes on January 13th 2014. After this amendments may be made to the Plan as a result of the consultation. The plan will then be laid before Buckingham Town Council for approval for submission to AVDC. It will then be submitted by AVDC to an independent examiner. If it is approved it will then be subject to a public referendum.

John Wilkins, pictured left, has for the last two years, been the Society's lead on the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan. He has made a very valuable contribution to the society during this time. He showed an impressive ability to master the complexity of the process and brought together a cohesive group who have worked really well to contribute to the draft Plan. John is about to move to Shrewsbury and he will be greatly missed by the Society. We are very much in his debt.

Planning – Ian Orton

The Buckingham townscape looks set to change significantly over the next months if AVDC grants two planning applications. Furthermore, as a consequence of the Lace Hill development Buckingham will almost certainly face severe traffic disruption during most of 2014 as a result of the re-siting of the Tesco roundabout.

The first, and most noticeable planning development, concerns the removal of the row of leylandii planted in the former Buckingham F.C. ground on Ford Meadow adjacent to Chris Williams Walk and their replacement by a wooden fence. The site is now owned by Buckingham University.

Most members will probably not object to the removal of leylandii. However these trees are good at helping to drain water-logged ground, especially in areas liable to flood such as Ford Meadow. Moreover, the proposed wooden fence may exacerbate the flood risk, especially if provision is made for run-off below the fence. Both the

Buckingham Society and Buckingham Town Council would prefer to see a tree-planting plan and/or a wire fence.

The other significant planning application concerns the former Hartridge side on Tingewick Road. The University has now submitted its plans for the redevelopment of this site to house new teaching facilities, some of which are for its Medical School, and student accommodation. Some mature trees, including those covered by tree preservation orders will be lost. However the proposed developments will open-up the right bank of the river which should improve the aesthetics of this part of Buckingham.

The re-siting of the Tesco roundabout marks the latest chapter in the Lace Hill development. Many of the houses are still not connected to a main sewer. The road access arrangements to the new school are problematic. The Town Council's Planning Committee has made many detailed suggestions about how the situation could be improved with little effect.

Green Spaces – Report from Ted farmer

McKenzie Close Beech tree replacement - The saga of the replacement of the fine copper beech, once a dominant feature of the Chandos Road junction area of London Road, is at last at an end. A Hornbeam, the choice of the Society, was planted on 6th December by the McKenzie Close developer, as close as possible to the position of the beech.



(This is the end of a prolonged and determined effort by Ted to ensure that the tree was replaced for which he deserves great credit. Editor)

Heartlands - The weed-infested mound has been raised with the Community Wildlife Project Steering Group. AVDC anticipate that weed growth will be progressively eliminated under a canopy of stronger growing bushes and trees.

A member drew attention to extensive surface damage near the skateboard park. This has been caused by tree contractor's heavy vehicles engaged in felling three previously mentioned, large sycamores on the river bank, considered hazardous after their roots have been exposed by high river levels. It was hoped the damage would be made good on completion of the work. Some ten willow trees on the flood plain are also marked for felling.

An Edible Woodland is to be designed, laid out and maintained on the flood plain opposite Linden Village, by Buckingham Transition Group. This is to be a community project for which Cllr Robin Stuchbury has negotiated a grant of £2,600 from BCC Local Area Forum.

A laboratory report on the Black Poplars along the cycle way indicates the disease is not as serious as first thought; the one dead tree is marked for felling.

A member expressed anger at a vandalized young prunus tree on the corner of Addington and Moreton Roads. The tree is owned by the VALE Housing Trust and further enquiries will be necessary regarding replacement.

Destination Buckingham Group – Roger Edwards

The Destination Buckingham Group (DBG) grew out of work done on the Buckingham Community Plan (BCP) back in 2006/7 on which the Buckingham Society had a seat in the steering group. The BCP identified the need for Buckingham to do a better job of marketing itself to the outside world. To this end a professional advertising/PR company was engaged to advise on how to do this. The result of this was the “Thoroughly Modern Traditional Buckingham” theme which had been arrived at after considerable research and input from key stakeholders in the town. Once detailed work began the Steering Group changed its name to the Destination Buckingham Group.

Limited funding (£10,000 p.a.) is provided by AVDC. The DBG sees its role as providing “seed money” to enable the development of ideas and/or funding one off items such as the maps that have been placed at strategic positions around the town. Members of the DBG are drawn from the Town Council, the Buckingham Business Group, the Buckingham Traders' Association (now known as Shop Buckingham), Rotary and the Buckingham Society. The DBG is chaired by Councillor Mike Smith.

The Group works very closely with Shop Buckingham and the main plans at present are:

1. An additional town map for visitors to be placed by the parking machine near Verney Close
2. An opportunity for town traders to run “pop-up” shops in the town for one day in the spring of next year
3. A “Cycling Criterium” on the weekend of 28/29 June next year. This would be a major new event for the town. The plan is that there would be a series of races of different lengths in and around the town with displays and other activities going on at the same time. It would be organised in conjunction with British Cycling, the governing body for cycling in the UK.

London Road Bridge – Roger Edwards

The London Road Bridge is in a poor state of repair. Many of the coping stones on the top of the bridge are broken with pieces missing from them, there are a large number of weeds growing on and around the bridge and recent pointing of the stonework, which is a lighter colour than the older mortar and the stones, has left the face of the bridge looking worse than it was before. As the bridge is the main entry into Buckingham it is important that it should be in good condition to present a positive first view of the town.

The bridge is the responsibility of Buckinghamshire County Council but the Council does not have the funds to undertake cosmetic repairs (the bridge is perfectly sound). So the Executive Committee has been considering whether it would be a

good use of Buckingham Society time to undertake a campaign to raise the funds required to improve the look of the bridge.

Bucks County Council officers estimate that the cost of initial restoration would be £25,000. This work would make the bridge look much tidier but it would not include cleaning the stonework or repairing the Marquess of Buckingham's coat of arms on the side of the bridge. Cleaning would be a very complex and expensive task and repairing the Coade stone coat of arms would require specialised craftsmanship.

Once all of the information is in place the Executive Committee will make a decision on how and whether to take this work forward.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

There continues to be a problem with heavy goods vehicles coming into the town, especially within the conservation area. They tend to follow satellite navigation systems which take them into the centre of the town and sometimes up Well Street where they become stuck often in Church Street. They regularly cause damage to buildings and cars. The photo on the right shows a 44 tonne lorry so hopelessly stuck that the driver had to sleep in the cab overnight until the police could help him to leave.



This matter was discussed at the recent Neighbourhood Action Group Annual General Meeting. It is to be one of the key priorities for action in 2014.

Dates for Your Diary

- 1 January 13th 2014 is the last day for comment on the draft Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 2 The Next Executive meeting will be held on Wednesday 22th January at 5.00 pm at The Villiers Hotel.

We would like to hear from you - Please give us some feedback - tell us what activities you would like The Buckingham Society to prioritise. Comments to kathyrobins@walnutyard.co.uk

If you would like to become involved in any of our activities or attend a meeting of the executive committee, then 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.