



The Buckingham Society

Campaigning for a Better Buckingham

Newsletter June 2014

Join us on Civic Day – Roger Edwards

On Saturday June 21st The Buckingham Society will be celebrating Civic Day, a national celebration of civic pride. The aim is to celebrate Buckingham and to enable local people to say "we care about where we live".

The event will start 10.00 a.m. with an announcement from the Town Crier and finish at 1.00 p.m. This year the Rotary Club, The Buckingham Society and the Buckingham



Advertiser, will be jointly honouring Buckingham's Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year with trophies presented by the Speaker of the House of Commons the Right Honourable John Bercow MP, who will also formally open the event. The Mayor of Buckingham, Councillor Lisa O'Donoghue, will also present cheques to local charities which are to benefit from Rotary's recent "Swimathon".

Local musicians will provide entertainment and tea and cakes on sale. Some local organisations will be setting up stalls to let people know what they do for the community.

The trustees of the Old Gaol are opening the museum and generously offering free entry for all.

Please make every effort to support this important and fun event. We should love to see you.

The Transport Group – David Child

This group started again with the first meeting on 25 April. The key projects on which we are focussing include:

HS2 construction traffic: this is a real concern and could have a widespread and unpleasant effect on all of us. We will try and evaluate the true effect and by joining

other local groups try reduce the 2 to 3 years of chaos it looks as if we may have to face.

Road safety: a number of pedestrian crossings points need to be made safer and more user friendly and we plan to make detailed cases for improvements at a number of locations within Buckingham.

Cycle and Pedestrian routes: both official and unofficial routes are to be recorded and their suitability for use and improvement reported with the aim of ensuring that all areas of Buckingham have good links across the parish.

The New Sainsbury Shop on Chandos Road: Before and After

You may recall seeing the first picture below in our December 2013 Newsletter showing the dilapidated Chandos Road cinema site. We consulted with the developers and recommended a design reminiscent of the original cinema. We are delighted to see the emerging design, now apparent in the second picture.



Green Spaces – Report from Ted Farmer

The large amount of debris resulting from felling three big sycamores on the Heartlands riverbank was left uncleared until we had drier ground conditions. It has now been removed. The post-and-rail fence has been extended on top of the bank as a safety measure. In the car park, a new guard rail fence along the drain channel is welcome but concern remains about the trees, most of which are dead. AVDC's plan is to replace all 20 trees at the same time but only when they have all died. We are exploring the possibility of accelerating the process.

Elsewhere in Heartlands, on the mound, there is heavy weed growth, particularly on the north facing slope. The southerly slopes are mainly long grass. Paths have just been mown on the slopes and round the perimeter. But masses of nettles obscure the river.

In the flood plain area a number of marked willows have now been felled. Some of the chippings will be used to mulch the nearby Edible Woodland where the first fruit trees and bushes have been planted by the Buckingham Transition Group.

Stop Press - Ted has been successful in working with the Town Council to arrange the clearing of rubbish from behind the site of 13 High Street, by the car wash. This has been an eyesore for years. The next stage is the restoration of the old orchard on the site. **Editor**

Planning – Ian Orton

As forewarned in the previous newsletter congestion levels have increased considerably, especially at rush hours and Saturdays as a consequence of road widening on the bypass and the construction of a “replacement” Tesco roundabout. Some town centre traders have reported a drop in trade as a consequence.

AVDC have given planning permission for a new Pets At Home and Aldi supermarket at the former Focus building just off the by-pass. This will result in another out of town supermarket and a pet shop that may lead to a further diversion of trade away from the town centre.

It looks as if Tesco will not use the permission granted three years or so ago to extend their existing supermarket on the ring road and have withdrawn applications for “pod” developments on the site. There have been no further substantive developments relating to Sainsbury’s proposed development opposite the existing Tesco site, especially relating to the Section 106 money that may have implications for medical services in the town.

The threat to the neighbourhood planning system posed by developers querying the status of these plans in the absence of a statutory local or strategic plan appears to have dissipated. The judge adjudicating the Judicial Review relating to the Tattenhall Local Neighbourhood Plan decided to reject the developers’ arguments. This should enable the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan to go forward to its next stage.

A prospective developer outlined proposals for the site encapsulated by Tingewick Road, the bypass and Gawcott Road at an exhibition in Villiers Hotel. This anticipates proposals made in the Buckingham Local Neighbourhood Development Plan and will probably form part of the pre-application consultative process. As such the plans displayed will probably bear no resemblance to the proposals formally submitted to AVDC. Time will tell.

London Road Bridge – Roger Edwards

Members will recall that at the last AGM it was agreed that the Buckingham Society should attempt to raise funds for the repair and cleaning of the London Road Bridge, (pictured below) which is in a poor state of repair. The bridge is the main entry point into Buckingham and it is important that it should be in good condition to present a positive first view of the town.



Discussions have been continuing with Buckinghamshire County Council with regard to replacing broken coping stones, clearing away vegetation and cleaning the bridge. The Council's bridge engineers have given a quote of £30,000 for the work and the Buckingham Society's Executive Committee has formed a working group to consider how the money could be raised. Members will be kept informed as the project progresses.

THE LONG BRIDGE a.k.a. LONDON ROAD BRIDGE - Ed Grimsdale



Buckingham's Long Bridge was built in 1805 at the expense of George, 1st Marquess of Buckingham, to create a pleasant route for the Prince of Wales on his journey to the Marquess's home at Stowe House for a week of extravagant partying. The Marquess was keen to impress the future King George IV through acts of public benevolence and charity because he coveted a particular recognition and reward.

Sadly, as Roger Edwards has pointed out to me, George, Marquess of Buckingham was never released from waiting in purgatory for he died in 1813 to be succeeded by his son, Richard. Richard had to wait until 1822 to gain the hoped-for honour becoming the 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. The family probably felt satisfied for Richard's Dukedom was the only one granted by King George IV.

In 1805, Buckingham's main river crossing, its Sheriff's Bridge, had been in a state of dereliction for some years. It was an ancient, narrow stone bridge but its central stone spans showed where they had been breached by flash floods. Buckingham, situated at the end of the river Great Ouse's first few miles, a length with a sharp gradient, was and is, prone to such sudden inundations. More than bridge maintenance had to be done... but Buckingham was a poor, "pocket" borough, and it relied on its "owner" or sponsor dipping into his own resources whenever it required significant infrastructure. Such help comes with strings of acknowledgement. That's why the bridge was embroidered with the two plaques – the Buckingham Swan, almost invisible these days on its western side, and the *Templa Quam Dilecta* coat of arms of the Marquess so visible from the footbridge that was added in the 20th century.

Both plaques were products of Eleanor Coad's workshop, which was in Lambeth, situated where the Royal Festival Hall now lies beside the Thames. The secret formula used to make Coad's stone died with her. It was capable of creating large, weather-resistant structures – the most famous of which, a lion, was kept on the Thames embankment outside her showroom to impress visitors. After her factory, initially run as Coad and Sealy, closed (by then it had been nicknamed the Lion Works) this great beast was left in situ



before being moved a short distance to the entrance steps to Waterloo railway station when its former site was being redeveloped for the Festival of Britain in 1951. Interestingly, it was King George VI who saved Coade's lion (originally painted red) for our nation. More recently, this old lion has been moved again to a more prominent position guarding Westminster Bridge.

To make room for "Bridge Street", the building on Well Street that has housed Buckingham's leading photographers since 1863 was reduced in length. In 1805 it had been a public house. Once all was ready, the Marquess declared that he would open the bridge during a lavish ceremony. He'd decked out a posse of special constables to protect the bridge until it was time to cut the tape. These constables were neither briefed nor trained – but they looked the part! A man, said to come from Thornborough, suddenly jumped out of the crowd, evaded the Marquess's men, ran over the bridge and loudly proclaimed on arriving at the other side of the river Great Ouse that he had been the first to cross the bridge. After that, the opening ceremony must have seemed rather bathetic.

Destination Buckingham Group – Roger Edwards

The Destination Buckingham Group (DBG) grew out of the Buckingham Community Plan (BCP) back in 2006/7. 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 this. The result was the "*Thoroughly Modern Traditional Buckingham*" theme which had been arrived at after considerable research and input from key stakeholders including BTA, AVDC and the traders. The Steering Group later changed its name to the Destination Buckingham Group.

Funding (£10,000 p.a.) is provided by AVDC. The DBG sees its role as providing "seed money" to stimulate ideas and/or fund items such as the maps that will be of benefit to the town. Committee members are drawn from the Town Council, the Buckingham Business Group, the Shop Buckingham (formerly known as the Buckingham Traders' Association), Rotary and the Buckingham Society.

Main plans and/or achievements to date are:

1. Planning for improved street signs with finger posts to the less noticeable shopping streets; West Street, Castle Street, Bridge Street and Well Street
2. Town maps placed at strategic points around the town
3. Improved profile for the Christmas Lights switch on
4. Support for the monthly Artisan Market
5. Support for the Christmas Shopping Spectacular
6. Plans for improved highlighting of the Cornwall's Meadow shopping area
7. A "*Bikeingham Cycling Day*" to take place on Sunday June 27th including a Family Cycle Ride, a mountain bike event and use of the Skate Park for a BMX event. These will be supported with stalls in the Cattle Pens, and the entire event aims to be a springboard for a full weekend of cycling based activities in 2015.

Civic Voice

Our membership of Civic Voice entitles Buckingham Society members each to one free National Trust pass and one English Heritage pass, subject to certain conditions.

Contact Kathy Robins for more information.

Dates for Your Diary in 2014

Civic Day	Saturday 21 st June 10.00-1.00pm at the Old Gaol
Next Executive Meetings	Wednesday 23 rd July 17.00-19.00 at the Villiers Hotel
	Wednesday 1 st October 17.00-19.00 same venue
AGM	Tuesday 25 th November 18.30pm

Executive Committee:

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

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 Tel: 07834 484762

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.