



The Buckingham Society

Campaigning for a Better Buckingham

Newsletter November 2014

The AGM on Tuesday 25th November 2014

Please join us for the Annual General Meeting, which starts with pre-meeting drinks at 6.15pm in Room 8, The Chandos Road Building, University of Buckingham.

The AGM itself begins at 7.00pm in The Sunley Lecture theatre.

After the AGM there will be a talk by the distinguished historian Julian Hunt, pictured right. The talk is entitled "All Roads Lead to Buckingham". It is an examination of the turnpike roads, bridges, inns and coaches which ran through the town.



CRISIS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - GRIFF RHYS JONES

Griff Rhys Jones, Civic Voice President, claimed that there is a crisis in civic engagement when he launched the manifesto of the civic movement on Friday 24 October. He said "This is a symptom of the frustration people feel as power is taken away from communities and they are subject to tokenistic consultation. We need to give all citizens opportunities to actively shape the future of their place and to give communities the powers they need to enable their town and city centres to prosper".

The Civic Voice manifesto will be calling on future Governments to:

- Make improving the quality of the public realm in our towns and villages a priority
- Give all citizens opportunities to actively shape the future of their place
- Give local communities the powers they need to enable their town centres to prosper

He added "If the Government is serious about Localism, they have to listen to the concerns coming forward from civic groups, resident associations and local councils. Your Committee will continue to ensure that the Society plays a leading role in this important endeavour.

AUTUMN COLOURS IN EVENLEY WOOD – Carolyn Cumming

Under the leadership of Michael Hunt, Buckingham Society members joined the Bucks Tree Club for a guided walk around the 60 acres that comprise Evenley Wood



Gardens. We were met by the owner, Mr Timothy Whiteley, who explained that within the 60 acres, a plot of 20 acres consists of acid soil, thus allowing for comprehensive plantings of those acid-loving trees and shrubs which will not otherwise grow in North Buckinghamshire. Autumn colours are at their brightest and most diverse on acid soils and there were

lots of rare specimens, as well as our more familiar trees, on which to feast our eyes.

Mr and Mrs Whiteley have developed this wonderful collection over the past 30 years and are still adding to it! In addition to the trees and shrubs, there is an equally superb collection of bulbs which add seasonal interest all year round. On this visit, the displays of cyclamen and sternbergia were at their best and there was even a rare variety of snowdrop from Greece in flower!

This is definitely a woodland garden to visit time and time again and it's a great place to go for a walk. From February 2015, an 'honesty' box will be installed, allowing the garden to be open every day. At weekends, tea, coffee and cake will also be available. Check for times at <http://www.evenleywoodgrden.co.uk>. The cost of entry is £5.00 per person (dogs welcome on leads). Whether or not you are a keen plantsman, a visit to this lovely garden will be hugely enjoyable.

For details of The Bucks Tree Club contact Marlene David, The Bucks Tree Club, Little Friars Arboretum, Pednor Bottom, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2SS

The Buckingham Society Transport Group – David Child

HS2 traffic

Information about the HS2 and its effects on Buckingham and surrounding areas is being gathered. It appears from the information so far that the town council, AVDC and BCC have not recognised the potential effect on Buckingham. The traffic chaos experienced in the last week of October caused by contractors fracturing a gas main should be a warning that HS2 effects - which will continue until 2025 - cannot be ignored. We will draw together information about the traffic and other effects on Buckingham and ensure that this issue is not missed by the town council.

Routes connecting Buckingham

It is important that links between the town centre and the various communities in and around Buckingham should be maintained and enhanced. So the footpaths (official and informal) are being mapped. Prior to the AGM there will be a display of the project so far.

New cycle paths

A number of new possible cycle paths are being discussed, driven largely by the railway station to be built at Winslow. Nothing will happen until January 2015 when public consultations should start. The Society will want to ensure that Buckingham becomes a hub rather than an end point to any cycle route plans.

Road crossing safety points

There are a number of roads in Buckingham where crossing points are either required or need improving. In partnership with Access for All, and using traffic speed and volume information, proposals will be made to Buckinghamshire County Council for crossing improvements.

Green Spaces – Ted Farmer

Throughout the year we have sought to draw attention to the shabby state of Cornwalls Meadow Car Park and particularly the trees, most of which have been dead for several years. AVDC, owners of the car park, have been aware of the situation but wished to replace all trees at the same time for the visual impact of uniformity, a view with which we had some sympathy. However, the judges of the Best Kept Village contest were very critical and the shabby car park was blamed for the failure of the town in the contest. AVDC have now approved the replacement of 26 dead tree stumps during the coming winter planting season.

In Bourton Park the Town Council has adopted frequent cutting to prevent seeding in an effort to eliminate the further outbreak of the rogue plant Himalayan Balsam. Progress cannot be judged until spring. It will be a long job.

Planning – Ian Orton

Ground Hog Day

The Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Over three years ago we embarked on the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan. What appeared at the time to be a significant nod to localism, especially in relation to land use and other planning-related issues, has become a millstone, due to the prevarications of a neighbouring parish council (Radclive cum Chackmore) and an error made by Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC). Be prepared for the third iteration of the Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan for your edification and comment.

It seems that AVDC is set on frustrating the progress of our plan (possibly because if approved by referendum it will have precedence over whatever the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan comes up with). AVDC is currently objecting to the plan's "aspiration" to

"reserve" land for a new southern by-pass as well as an A421/A422 link. Buckinghamshire County Council also has a problem with the southern by-pass proposal although it is more sympathetic to the A422/421 link and has come-up with a form of words that should be acceptable to everyone (except for AVDC).

Planning Applications

Yet more of the same here. There has been a seemingly unending flow of applications, some of which seem to keep on recurring. Most of these will result in either houses in multiple occupation or developments that target a latent demand for accommodation. These are occasionally leavened by bigger "exciting" developments, some of which even include social housing, targeted at the rest of the population.

Public Toilets

Buckingham Town Council intends to build a new toilet block on land adjacent to the Waitrose car-park. Members may have read a recent article in The Buckingham Advertiser about AVDC's objections to the Town Council's proposals. AVDC claims that the site is a) unsafe and b) could be used to hold a prospective developer of the land behind 13 High Street to "ransom", because the land could be used as an access point to the site. However, no such bid is imminent. Furthermore, because the site is on the floodplain any application for development will not secure permission. Finally, the land can be accessed at a number of other points.

The Bypass – There will be ongoing misery for weeks to come (another unforeseen consequence of the Lace Hill development as it is the developers who are responsible for the road works).

London Road Bridge – Roger Edwards

Buckinghamshire County Council has agreed to undertake some maintenance work on the bridge walls which, would appear to go some way to achieving the improvements to the bridge that the Society had been seeking. We are waiting to discover when the work will be carried out.

Destination Buckingham Group – Roger Edwards

The Destination Buckingham Group comprises members from various local organisations including the Town Council, local businesses and the Buckingham Society. The group continues to seek ways to encourage more people to come to the town as visitors, shoppers etc. Present plans include:

1. a leaflet to be distributed to all houses and businesses in the town seeking suggestions on how to encourage people to Buckingham
2. flags signposting the entrance from the car park to the shops to be in place, it is hoped, in time for Christmas
3. discussions to take place with Buckinghamshire County Council in order to have lamppost banners attached before Christmas

4. in conjunction with “Shop Buckingham”, the Christmas lights switch-on would take place on November 29 and a trader event would take place on December 13th to coincide with the Christmas Parade
5. there will be another “Bikeingham” event next summer
6. pressure will continue to be exerted on local councils over the need for new toilets to be in place as soon as possible

Civic Day – Roger Edwards

The centre of Buckingham was thronged on June 21st by people celebrating Buckingham Civic Day. Organised by the Buckingham Society, the morning started with John Bercow presenting awards to the Buckingham Citizen of the Year and the Junior Citizen of the Year. The awards were given to local people considered to have made an important contribution to the life of the town. In a fine example of local civic co-operation, the awards were sponsored by Buckingham Rotary, the Buckingham Society, the Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser and Waitrose.

The presentations were followed by a tea party inside the Old Gaol which the museum trustees had kindly agreed to open free of charge for Civic Day.

Meanwhile, on the terrace outside the museum, local musicians provided entertainment while members of a wide range of local community organisations talked to local people about their various roles and activities around the town. These included Community Police Officers, staff from Buckinghamshire County Council's highways team, the local Job Club, Project Street Life – a local youth club, the Buckingham Fair Trade group and a number of other groups with interests ranging from community efforts to raise money for cancer research, purchasing a number of defibrillators for the town, the Friends of the Old Gaol and the Buckingham Society itself which was successful in recruiting a number of new members. Helped by beautiful weather the whole event was a great celebration of our splendid town. Buckingham Civic Day 2015 will take place on Saturday June 20th – put it in your diaries.



Dates for Your Diary

Buckingham Society AGM

Tuesday 25th November 18.30pm

Neighbourhood Action Group Annual Meeting Wednesday 26th November 7.00pm

Executive Committee:

Kathy Robins	Chair and newsletter editor
Belinda Morley-Fletcher	Secretary
Tony Mayston	Treasurer
Gill Jones	Membership Secretary
Ian Orton	Planning
Paul Flelo	Transport and 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	Without 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: 07834484762
If you would like be become in 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