



## Newsletter February 2016

### A Word from our Chair – Roger Edwards

Happy New Year – let us hope that 2016 will be a good year for Buckingham and the Buckingham Society!

Starting the year on a positive note, work has started on the restoration of the London Road Bridge, see below left. This historic entrance to the town has looked shabby for a few years now and it will be good to see it brought back to something like its original state. It is pleasing that Buckinghamshire County

Council has listened to the Buckingham Society and recognised the importance of the bridge by undertaking this task.



It is also good to see that developers building houses in the town are trying to maintain and/or improve our environment. For example, the plan to save the Victorian summer house on what is now called “Nightingale Rise” (off Moreton Road) and incorporate it into a modern dwelling and the aim to improve and extend the riverside walk at the “Clarence Park” site. The Society is well aware that building development has to take place and if we can encourage developers

to help to improve our town while building new houses, then we shall be doing a good job.

In 2016 there will be more plans put forward for new developments, in and around Buckingham. Your Executive Committee will continue to monitor what is happening and will work to try to maintain and enhance Buckingham. There will be challenges but by working closely with colleagues on the Town Council and other local councils we would hope to protect what is best about our lovely market town.

To continue its work, the Buckingham Society needs to maintain a healthy membership. There will be a number of activities in the coming year to recruit new members but we also need your help. If every member of the Society was to recruit one new member we would, double our membership. Please talk to your friends,



relatives, people you bump into in the shops etc. and try to get them to join us. Just put Gill or me or any member of the Committee in touch with prospective members and we will get the necessary paperwork to them. Your Society needs you and as many new members as we can get.

## Royal Latin School Discovery Centre



David Hudson, Head teacher at The Royal Latin School, has kindly agreed to host a meeting for Buckingham Society members at the newly completed Discovery Centre. This follows his presentation at our AGM three years ago when he told us about the beginning of the project. This will be our opportunity to see the finished product.

The presentation will be at The Discovery Centre on Thursday 3rd March at 7.00pm and will be followed by wine, soft drinks and nibbles.

To attend tell Kathy Robins: 01280 813967 or email [Kathyrobins@walnutyard.co.uk](mailto:Kathyrobins@walnutyard.co.uk) by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

## The Plight of Hedgehogs – Simon Cole

Hedgehog populations are declining rapidly across the UK. In Buckingham, we have historically had good population numbers and it is likely that hedgehogs will be able to survive in adequate numbers, whereas in other parts of the home counties this mammal will disappear. To put this in context, in the 1960s it is estimated there were 36.5 million individual hedgehogs in the UK; there are now fewer than 1.5 million individuals left; of which fewer than 1 million are left in England. As Buckingham expands there will be more threats to the hedgehog population, due to road fatalities, loss of habitat, predation from dogs and fencing across foraging routes. It is possible that without further intervention, hedgehogs could decline in-line with current UK trends and disappear from Buckingham by the end of the decade. We are lucky that there is good habitat and habitat corridors across



Buckingham, but small populations are usually more vulnerable to negative impacts.

To help hedgehogs we should ensure that fences include gaps to enable hedgehogs to move from one garden to another and avoid using slug pellets.

Hedgehogs are enormously beneficial to gardens, particularly in their appetite for slugs and other pests.

## 29-30 West Street

Buckingham Society members were invited by architects CMI Architecture Ltd to look round 29-30 West Street (formerly Jilly Sanders dress shop) and to see for themselves the wealth of historic detail that this Grade II \* listed house incorporates. Plans for regeneration are still subject to approval but the architect has promised to keep us informed of the detailed proposals.

## Thames Valley Alerts

Thames Valley Police is encouraging you, your friends and neighbours to register for their community messaging system. Registering to receive messages offers you the opportunity to receive local crime and safety alerts via voice, email or text. For more information visit the Thames Valley Alert website.



### The Path From Waitrose Car Park To Bridge Street

This path, is now open and being used. The surrounding area has been tidied, vegetation cut back and the whole area is more pleasant. There only remains a rather difficult step up from the path to Bridge Street. We have been told that The Guinness Trust will be finishing this work.

## Green and Open Spaces – Ian Orton

Buckingham's treescape and open spaces help define and differentiate the town.

According to David Stevens, one of the Buckingham Society's founding members, a multiple gold medal winner at the Chelsea Flower Show and former Mayor very few towns have such a varied treescape as Buckingham. Very few towns also have such an abundance of open space. Not all of this is "public open space". But most can be accessed by the general public. Furthermore, Buckingham's network of open spaces and paths now makes it possible to walk from its outskirts to the town centre without passing through any built-up areas at all.

Unfortunately, however, this heritage is always likely to be under threat, and not just as a consequence of development.

Trees age, get infected by disease and die. Rarely a week goes by without at least one tree being felled, and that is in the developed areas. And as development proceeds the likelihood is that more trees will disappear as residents that live

adjacent to the by-pass and the new Clarence Court development will have already noticed.

New development, especially on greenfield sites, has obvious implications for open spaces. Notwithstanding all the recent activity at Lace Hill, Buckingham will experience more development over the next 20 years.

This need not necessarily be to the detriment of green and open spaces. It seems likely that Buckingham will get a new park when the planned development involving land between the by-pass, Gawcott Road and Tingewick Road comes on stream. This could provide an element of a potential “linear park” extending from the Radclive roundabout to Lock Cottage on the rewartered canal.

Section 106 and New Homes Bonus Money could be available to extend and enhance Buckingham’s network of footpaths.

And the University’s plans to develop its Tingewick Road site should provide a new riverside “space” that should also enhance Buckingham.

But these and other developments will have to be monitored constantly to make sure that the environment does not deteriorate as a consequence. So too will Buckingham’s existing green and open spaces.

One of the really encouraging developments in recent years is the extent to which local groups have started to “adopt” open spaces and to maintain them making good a shortfall in care from local and other authorities. The Friends of the Railway Walk and the Friends of the Old Churchyard are two such examples.

But much more needs to be done to maintain the current infrastructure. My old friend the Green Man on Maids Moreton Avenue needs attention for example.

New members of the Green and Open Spaces Special Interest Group will be warmly welcomed.

## **The Transport Group – David Child**

The group have been working on a number of projects over the 3 months since the last newsletter.

### **Railway walk**

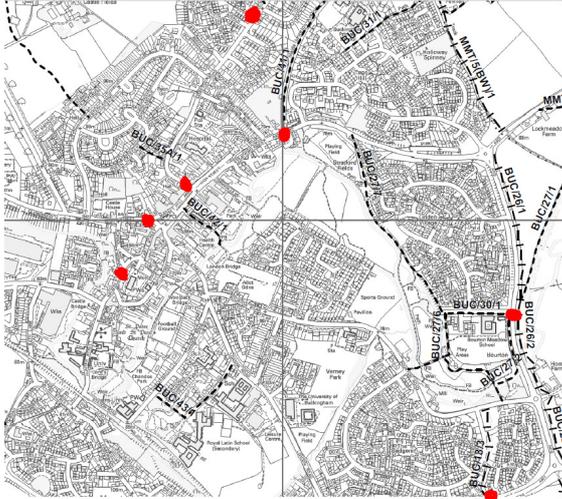
A report on the railway walk was presented to the Buckingham Town council in December suggesting that this pathway should be registered on the BCC definitive map. We are pleased this proposal was supported (it was on their wish list) and the way forward is clear. Hopefully in the next newsletter we will be able to report solid progress with this project.

### **S106 funds**

As reported in earlier newsletters only by obtaining S106 funds from developers is it possible to gain road improvements, even when improving safety at road crossings.

Seven detailed proposals have been sent to councillors asking that they be included as conditions for any new planning applications. There are more being prepared and when they have been reviewed they also will be put to the councillors.

S106 Projects are indicated by red markers.



### Pathways

We are still looking for members who are prepared to walk along their local pathways and record some details so they can be added to the society's records.

Like the example to the right. This is the BCC/13/2 footpath near Lace Hill that the Society has asked to be reinstated after the London Road / A421 roundabout redesign was completed.



## Planning – Carolyn Cumming

### Aylesbury Vale Local Plan (VALP)

The Society sent in a response to the consultation for the latest document, '*Issues and Options*' Consultation, to emerge in the Local Plan process. What emerges is an ever increasing confusion. It is not at all clear how much growth from the 'Housing Market Area' (HMA) the Vale will be expected to accommodate. The HMA includes Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks Districts. What is clear is that, until an adopted Local Plan is in place, speculative developments will continue to gain an unfair advantage.

A draft Local Plan is expected to appear this year, followed by a 'Proposed Submission Local Plan' with an Examination in early 2017. If any member would like to see a copy of the Society's response to the *Issues & Options* paper, then please ask one of the committee for a copy.

It is to be hoped that the Neighbourhood Plan (BNDP) affords some clarity on future developments within the town but, as reported in the following paragraph, others have been gravely disappointed.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

Civic Voice alerted us to the disquieting news from Hook Norton that Communities Minister, Greg Clark, allowed an Appeal from Gladman Developments over a 54 housing development, which had not been allocated within their Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Hallam Land at Tingewick Road**

A report detailing results from the Archaeological Survey of this site indicates new and interesting evidence of a Roman settlement to the south east around St Rumbold's Well. We have yet to see any detailed plans for the site but Hallam Land have submitted "minor amendments" with regard to a new roundabout at the junction of Tingewick Road and the bypass. Does this presage an already agreed layout? The Society is concerned that, if this is the case, the local community has had no further opportunity to comment on the overall scheme and could lead to unwelcome outcomes, such as experienced at Lace Hill.

### **Well Street Chapel**

Approval has been given for this fine building to be restored as a café/wine bar with an upstairs function room. This is good news and welcome, although we note that the arrangements for waste disposal and access for all will require sensitive management.

### **Toilet Block and Mobility Unit**

Plans have now been agreed to provide a new, contemporary toilet block with access for all as part of a refurbished mobility unit on the existing site at the north-west corner of Cornwalls Meadow car park.

### **Clarence Court**

The felling of trees and undergrowth along the riverside illustrates yet again the frustration experienced by Buckingham residents at the ease with which 'minor amendments' to agreed planning applications can be given consent and turn out to be rather more than minor. So-called minor amendments can be hugely detrimental to the local site, and yet the local voice has no recourse to object to them.

### **Bourton Meadow School**

The temporary mobile teaching block is to be replaced by a single storey building with associated hard standing. Although a positive step, the Society feels the design is lacking in imagination and misses an opportunity to introduce a 'greener' environmental approach.

### **The Summer House: Update**

Readers will recall that this Listed Building was to have been restored as a Bicycle Shed as part of the development on the land behind Market Hill ('Nightingale Rise' in developer speak). New proposals have been received which, if approved, would restore the façade of the building as an entrance hall to a two bed, contemporary

dwelling behind it. On the basis of the planning papers submitted, Planning Group members felt the design had merit and would, ultimately, provide a better use for the structure than a bicycle park.

## Executive Committee:

Roger Edwards	Chair
Alistair Alcock	University representative
David Child	Transport and Planning
Carolyn Cumming	Planning
Paul Fello	Transport and Planning
Ed Grimsdale	Planning and society historian
Gill Jones	Membership Secretary
Tony Mayston	Treasurer
Belinda Morley-Fletcher	Secretary
Nigel Morrison	Destination Buckingham
Ian Orton	Green and Open Spaces
Kathy Robins	Newsletter Editor, planning and transport

## Dates for Your Diary

Visit to the Discovery Centre, Royal Latin School 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 19.00 hrs  
Executive Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 17.00 hrs Villiers Hotel All members welcome  
Executive Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> May at 17.00 hrs Villiers Hotel All members welcome  
Civic Day Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June – More details to follow  
Annual Lecture and Garden Party 21<sup>st</sup> July Lecture 18.30 hrs at The Radcliffe Centre

## 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](mailto:kathyrobins@walnutyard.co.uk) Tel: 07834484762  
If you would like to be involved in any of our activities or attend a meeting of the executive committee, then contact us or just come along.

[www.buckinghamssociety.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamssociety.org.uk)