



The Buckingham Society

Campaigning for a Better Buckingham

Newsletter June 2016

A Word from our Chair – Roger Edwards



In 1894 an article in *The Westminster Gazette*, a newspaper that no longer exists, described Buckingham as, “*the most absolutely uninteresting county town in the kingdom, though there are those that declare that this description is a little rough on Chelmsford*”. Plainly something had happened in Buckingham (and Chelmsford) to upset the author of those words but clearly no Buckingham Society member would agree with such a sentiment (at least let us hope not).

I chanced upon that quote when doing some research for a talk on the Buckingham Society that I did a few weeks ago to the Probus group. It was 80 years after that article appeared, in 1974, that the Society was formed as the “Buckingham Action Society”, becoming the Buckingham Society in 1979.

The original aims for the Society were spelt out as being:

- To arouse the interest of the people of Buckingham, not just on the past, but in the future of their town
- To press particularly for action to be taken to solve Buckingham’s traffic problems
- To encourage high standards of planning and architecture in the town by examining all planning proposals with a view to supporting the good, improving the mediocre and vigorously opposing the bad
- To guard against pollution and other threats to our environment
- To preserve, protect and improve features of historic or public interest

Those aims continue to stand us in good stead today as the Society tries to preserve the best of Buckingham’s heritage and to encourage good and careful planning for the future.

For my research, Helene Hill kindly loaned me copies of the early meeting notes, newsletters and so on most of which contained many references to her father, Mr S.O. Meadows, who could be said to be the founding father of the Buckingham Society. Reading the papers, it was heartening to see how many of the founding members continue to belong to the Society. It was also interesting to look at some of the early battles fought by the Society, for example:

- The building of the by-pass to alleviate traffic problems and encourage new shops, houses and industry
- The creation of the conservation area in order to save historic building following 1960s depredations
- Preventing AVDC from demolishing the Town Hall to allow for “road improvements”
- Proposals for a Riverside Walk
- Restoring the London Road (Long) Bridge which was first mooted in the early 1970s
- Concern about building on flood plains
- Developing design criteria for new housing
- Maintaining and developing Buckingham’s green and open spaces

There were many more examples that showed that Buckingham would not be quite the place it is today without the Buckingham Society prompting and cajoling.

And the Society must continue to do just that – trying to protect Buckingham and ensure that, as it grows and develops, it remains a great place to live. We will work closely with the Town Council, our local Councillors, the University, the people of Buckingham and any other appropriate organisations to achieve that end.

The town faces a lot of challenges including growth in Milton Keynes and Bicester adding to pressure on our high street shops; HS2 and the traffic it will bring; increasing traffic in general; more housing bringing more people and now the possibility that the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan will be put to one side by AVDC opening the way for unwanted and inappropriate development.

It is vitally important for our town and its inhabitants, now and in the future, that we all of us do what we can to ensure that these challenges are met and dealt with. It would be a tragedy, and a great shame for the founders of the Buckingham Society, if at some point in the future the words of a newspaper article written 122 years ago were to come back to haunt us.

Candleford Court

We have had good news about the path beside Candleford Court linking Bridge Street and the Waitrose car park. The owners are assessing the repairs required to make the path safe. These repairs will include reinstating the parts of the path damaged by flooding, adding additional run off channels and removing the concrete lip by the Bridge Street access. They are also considering installing safety barriers on either side of the two sluice gates.

Royal Latin School Discovery Centre



The Buckingham Society nominated the Royal Latin School Discovery Centre for a Civic Voice Design Award. The nomination was short listed in the New Build category. The picture on the right shows Jo Ballentyne, Director of Development at the school, members of the architecture team GSS Architecture and Kathy Robins.



Ed Grimsdale Is Honoured By the Town Council

At the Mayor- Making ceremony on Friday 20th May Ed Grimsdale, the society historian, was awarded a silver salver and granted the Freedom of Buckingham. The award was to recognise the tremendous contribution that Ed has made to the town for many years. See the picture on the left.

Civic Day

On Saturday June 18th the Buckingham Society will once again be organising Buckingham Civic Day, giving the people of Buckingham the opportunity to celebrate their town.

This year the Society plans to revive an old Buckingham tradition of the “Feast Day”. In the past an ox would have been roasted and, while the Society is not going quite that far, quality food and soft drinks will be available in the courtyard of Clay’s Butchers from 11.00 a.m.

In addition, there will be music outside the Old Gaol from 10.00 a.m. where the Buckingham Choral Society will sing and well known Buckingham personality Linda Watkins will be playing and singing in Clay’s Courtyard.



As in previous years, proceedings will be opened by Buckingham’s wonderful leather-lunged Town Crier, Russell Cross, and John Bercow and Town Mayor Andy Mahi will

be presenting the awards to the Buckingham Rotary Club's Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year and cheques to various local groups who raised funds through the Rotary Swimathon earlier this year.

We all know that Buckingham is a great place to live and we are hoping that as many members of the Buckingham Society and other good people of Buckingham will come out to show their pride in our lovely market town and have a bit of fun.

The Buckingham Society is very grateful to Jackie Bramham and her team at Clay's for providing the food and facilities for what should be a great way to celebrate Buckingham and also to AVDC and Waitrose for their sponsorship.

The Transport Group – David Child

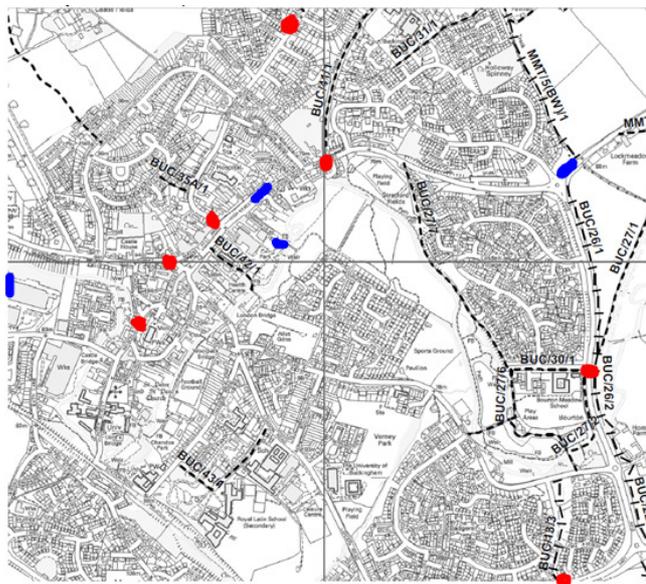
The group is continuing to work on 3 main areas of transport related sectors.

Railway walk

Which runs from the Buckingham bypass to Tingewick Road (and beyond) is broken in to 3 sections. The land is owned by Buckingham Town, AVDC and Buckingham University. The aim is to get the three sections on a "Public path agreement" which ultimately will see the whole of this path on the BCC definitive map. The Buckingham Society has had meetings with the University with the aim of establishing the best routes across its property to enhance the old station platform whilst meeting the BCC requirements for a Public path agreement.

S106

Since the last newsletter another 4 proposals have been written up marked in blue on the map below although only 3 have been sent to Councillors. 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 but because of rather complex rules it is difficult to obtain the funding required. It is understood that possibly in 2017 a new funding stream - The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - will replace S106. We are lead to believe the CIL will be more flexible.



Pathways

The transport group mapped many paths last year and hidden away on the Society's website is an early attempt of making that data available. The URL is: -

<http://buckinghamssociety.org.uk/MapPoints.htm>

We will be trying to add to that data this year but the main drive will be to link up with the aims of the Open spaces group to try and record and improve the links between the open / green spaces.

Buckingham / Winslow Cycleway

Starting this year is the link to Winslow funded by the east / west railway.

Below is just the section from Buckingham to Padbury with the numbers 101 to 117 referring to detail drawings.



David Child.

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Planning – Carolyn Cumming

VALE OF AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN (VALP)

Not to be confused with AVLPL! Following the debacle that accompanied the withdrawal of Aylesbury's Vale previous Local Plan draft, **VALP** is now in the final stages of preparation before being submitted for approval by the Planning Inspectorate. Public consultation will take place from 3rd July – 7th September 2016 and it is essential that we all comment on this final draft of the plan. Please send any comments you might have to the Planning Committee of the Buckingham Society before the end of July.

Moreton Road, Phase III (14/02601/AOP Land to west Castlemilk, Moreton Road)

Buckingham has, of course, its own Neighbourhood Plan (BNDP) in place which will determine where new development will occur over the next 15 years. However, there has already been a challenge to our Neighbourhood Plan with the application for 130 houses behind the current Moreton Road developments (above). Initially,

this plan was rejected by AVDC, principally on traffic and highways issues, but the County Council Highways Department then re-considered their verdict and posed no objection to the plan on its second round of application. Puzzlingly, on the basis that a second filter lane at the Stratford Road roundabout would ease the traffic situation. Officers at AVDC recommended approval but the application has been “called in” and is now referred to the Secretary of State for determination.

This promises to be a key case. There is no provision in the Neighbourhood Plan for this site and your Society has been vociferous in its objection to the plan, as has the Town Council, on the grounds that it is outside the allocated development areas identified within the Neighbourhood Plan. The Minister has, therefore, to either back the local community’s wishes (as legislation indicates he should) or send a body blow to all Neighbourhood Plans.

Other Applications

29 West Street . The former Jilly Sanders shop has been the subject of some comment. The Buckingham Society were invited by the architect to look round this historic building before work commenced and to learn what is proposed both for the ground floor and the upper floors, which contain the important (and fascinating) Tudor wall paintings. These have been recorded



and inspected by English Heritage, as well as the Historic Buildings Officer at AVDC and we are confident that the greatest care will be taken to preserve the paintings intact. Work is currently proceeding on the ground floor which is to open as a café/internet centre. Work will not begin on the upper floors until this is finished and the proposal is then to return it to residential accommodation with stringent conditions.

16/00847/APP, West End Farm, Brackley Road

An application was received for a residential care complex on this site. Given its remoteness from the town centre and the lack of an accessible footway to the town, the Society believes it is not a good option for this site. Although recognising the need for extra care for the elderly within the Buckingham area, concerns were expressed about the isolation of such a facility which would be in danger of becoming a ‘ghetto-ised’ settlement with little opportunity for integration with the community at large.

Land off Chandos Road

More recently, an application has been received to erect a block of flats and one dwelling within the wooded area at the foot of Waglands Gardens next to the entrance to the Royal Latin School. Again, there have been several objections to both the loss of green space and the chaos that increase in traffic would cause.

There has been a plethora of applications to fell, or lop, trees within the town centre, but both the Planning Committee and the Town Council have been alarmed at the

general denuding of the treescape in Buckingham. Whilst we accept that some maintenance is essential, we want to ensure that work is carried out only when necessary and with professional expertise.

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

Civic Day Saturday 18th June at 10.00am – 1.00pm Details above
Annual Lecture and Garden Party 21st July: Lecture 18.30 hrs at The Radcliffe Centre.
Speaker Claire de Carle, garden historian, Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust and afterwards at Prebend House for drinks and canapes
Executive Meeting 27th July at 17.00hrs Villiers Hotel
Executive Meeting 28th October at 17.00hrs Villiers Hotel
Annual General Meeting November 15th at 6.30pm

We should 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 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