



Newsletter February 2017

A Word from our Chair – Roger Edwards



Spring is pretty much upon us. Snowdrops and crocuses are in bloom and daffodils are just about ready to burst forth. The next few weeks, to my mind, constitute the best part of the year as we look forward to longer days, warmer weather and spending more time out of doors.

And how fortunate we are here in Buckingham to have so many places within the town to be able to benefit from the better weather. We have lovely parks, play areas and green spaces, all looked after so well by the Town Council, as well as the Riverside Walk, the Heartland area and the lovely spinney area between Western Avenue and, what we now have to call, Summerhouse Hill. And it was while walking through one of the parks that I got to thinking about all the other reasons we have to be thankful that we live where we do.

There are numerous excellent pubs, cafés and restaurants to satisfy our hunger and thirst. The Old Gaol and the Library exercise our minds, while our bodies can be tuned (up to a point) at the Swan Pool. For culture, we have the Summer Music Festival, the Literary Festival, the Town Council's Fringe events, Band Jam and other musical happenings, the Film Place and numerous other pop-up events throughout the year. Then there is the Christmas Parade, the Community Pantomime, the multi-various U3A groups that we can take part in, the Rugby Club, various football clubs including, for younger people, the hugely successful Moretonville and more events, clubs and organisations than I could possibly name (apologies to those I have not included) plus a thriving University. And we also have one of the cleanest towns around thanks to the sterling efforts of Buckingham's band of road sweepers and litter pickers. And I almost forgot – a pretty good bus service. As somebody says; "What is not to like"?

Of course, not everything is perfect. Shops and businesses face a number of challenges and the town is inevitably going to have to cope with more houses, increasing traffic, the need for more school places and the strain being put upon health and social care services. However, Buckingham is well placed to face those

tests. We have a lively, busy and, above all, interested population. And we are fortunate to have Town, District and County Councillors who are ever vigilant and determined, as is the Buckingham Society, to ensure that Buckingham remains a great place to live.

So, despite grumbling being almost a national sport in the UK, it seems to me that, as we start to leave winter behind and head into spring, we should put grumbling aside and celebrate Buckingham. Let us all be thankful for what we have here in our, still lovely, market town.



Message from the Editor - On the left is a view from The Spinney that Roger mentions. It is maintained by AVDC, unlike the other parks in Buckingham which are maintained by Buckingham Town Council. AVDC have just completed a major tidy-up.

Planning – Carolyn Cumming

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

A further consultation is expected this summer. Following a major shift in the projections for population increase, the revised housing supply is now set at 26,800. With half of this figure already in the pipeline, AVDC now states that there is a sufficient 5 year supply. This means that Buckingham's Neighbourhood Plan is considered to be fully up to date and, therefore, applications outside of the allocated areas in the BNDP are likely to be refused.

Care Homes

It would seem that Buckingham has been singled out as the ideal place for care homes. No less than three applications have been (or are about to be) submitted. The proposed sites, catering for self-contained flats, as well as extra care units are:

1. West End Farm, Brackley Road
2. Land behind Grand Junction
3. Land at Lace Hill

The Lace Hill site would be developed along with a new medical facility and would, therefore, seem the most logical place for a care home. The planning group are supportive of the scheme but would want to see a continued medical facility at the current North End site.

Land behind the Grand Junction would mean a significant loss of the green space and the remains of the old fruit trees. It also poses unacceptable risk of flooding, not to mention additional traffic on the access road to the main car park.

West End Farm on Brackley Road was not earmarked to take any development in the Buckingham & Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP) and the Planning Group have echoed the Town Council's concerns on creating what in effect would be a gated community with no easy pedestrian or bus access to the town centre. The site exits on to a dangerous stretch of the Brackley Road.

Moreton Road (Proposed Phase III)

This application is now the subject of an appeal which is being heard by the Inspectorate in Aylesbury. Thanks to a revision by AVDC of housing supply numbers, (see above), the District Council have submitted their objection to the scheme on the basis that it does not confirm with the BNDP.

Land at Lace Hill

A presentation outlining the masterplan for this area proposed a medical facility with care home, a Lidl store and, from Whitbread, a Premier Inn alongside a Beefeater Restaurant and Costa Coffee Drive-Through. Two applications in respect of the Lidl store and the Premier Inn have been received. Both appear functional with little in the overall design to delight the eye.

The Society has contacted the developer with the objective of persuading them to look again at the design of the Beefeater and Costa coffee facilities. Both of these would occupy a prominent corner site and we argue could be developed with greater sensitivity and distinction, rather than the current 'motorway' image.

Landscape is also a major concern. The Society believes it is very important to ensure retention of native hedgerows and to provide an attractive setting as possible to offset the spread of tarmac and dominance of red brick, corporate signage, etc. One positive aspect is the proposed re-alignment of the Right of Way to incorporate the bridleway and footpath between the bypass road and the A413.

Town Centre

Another Costa Coffee is planned for the old HSBC offices. This – at the last count – would increase Buckingham's coffee cafes to 22. A far cry from the sole offer that in days gone by was to be found at the Austrian Tea Rooms!

Domino's Pizza has opened on its controversial site adjacent to a pedestrian crossing with no obvious parking bay for either customers or delivery. We will continue to monitor the potential hazards this is likely to cause to pedestrians.

Stratford Villas

Stalwart member of the Society, Una Robinson, has described in detail the reasons behind our objections to this further development on a site that has breached several previous planning conditions. It still awaits a decision.

Land Off Chandos Road (Waglands Garden)

The Society has strongly objected to the erection of a block of flats and a detached dwelling on this thickly tree'd parcel of land and continues to object despite a number of minor revisions suggested by the developer.

It would mean, in our view, an unacceptable loss of mature trees, originally planted to adorn the Brookfield Lodge establishment. There are also legitimate concerns about the inevitable increase in traffic, as well as flooding on to neighbouring sites. No decision has yet been made.

Destination Buckingham Group

The Destination Buckingham Group (DBG) comprises members from various organisations around the town including the Town Council, local businesses and the Buckingham Society.

The group is very ably chaired by Councillor Mike Smith and seeks ways to improve the look of the town and encourage more people to come to the town as visitors, shoppers etc.

Recently the DBG has agreed to give £2000 to the Buckingham Old Gaol Trust, to help with costs of purchasing a secure display case for the wonderful Lenborough Hoard when it goes on show. A further £2000 will go to help fund the Buckingham Literary Festival and other sums are to be provided to help with redecorating the Tourist Information Centre in the Old Gaol, refurbishing the AVDC finger post adjacent to the Bus Stand and towards new Interpretation Boards in Bourton Park and near the newly-opened Canal.

Other projects going ahead include, reducing the amount of signage that clutters the town centre and setting up “Wayfinding Totems”. These will be street mounted sign boards that will point visitors to Buckingham to places of interest around the town. They will be located adjacent to the Bus Stand, near The Old Gaol, and (perhaps) in front of The Old Town Hall.

All of these projects will be funded by Aylesbury Vale District Council and will go towards furthering the aim of ensuring that Buckingham is great place

Preserving and Enhancing Buckingham's Treescapes, hedgerows and open spaces – Ian Orton

Prompted by the wave of hedgerow grubbing and tree cutting by developers that afflicted Buckingham in late 2015 and 2016 Buckingham Town Council have established a Commission to look at ways in which our trees, hedgerows and open spaces can be safeguarded and enhanced.

A steering group involving both local societies and interest groups as well as AVDC, Buckinghamshire County Council and the Town Council met in October to establish the composition of the Commission and the term of reference for a written report.

The latter will be delivered to the Town Council's Environment Committee in April.

I am representing the Buckingham Society on the Commission. This has met on three occasions with another meeting scheduled before delivery of the report.

The Commission has also put together a questionnaire to gauge public opinion on the subject which can be accessed online via the Town Council's website.

In addition the Commission will have a table at the annual Buckingham Town Meeting which will be held at the Community Centre on 22 March to provide another opportunity for people to make their views known.

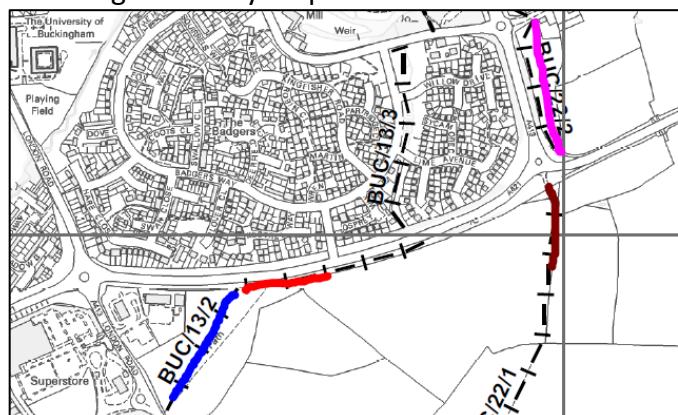
If Society members have any suggestions about how we can help conserve and enhance our treescape and open spaces, along with the surprising amount of hedgerows that still exist in Buckingham they would be gratefully received.

The Transport Group – David Child

As reported in the last newsletter the transport group continues to work on a number of projects and of course, unfortunately, they have to revisit some the tasks they thought had been resolved.

Last year we reported to BCC the public rights of way shown in the map below

Public rights of way map



Although the transport group have not visited the site in 2017 the pathway BUC/22 (brown and purple above) was viewed late last November and had been cleared.

The BUC/13 (blue and red above) still needed to be resolved and the blue section link to Needlepin Way looks to be somewhat off before this section is re-opened to the public.

The continued closure of the Needlepin Way (Lace Hill) that feeds into the roundabout into the Tesco access road has been raised with BCC but currently we are unable to report why this important second access to Lace Hill is still blocked off.

The good news is that the **Buckingham / Winslow Cycleway** is effectively open and on the occasions I have driven along this route it is good to see it is being put to good use by families and cycling enthusiasts. It highlights the need for more good quality

cycle / pedestrian paths which serve Buckingham and other major towns – Silverstone / Brackley / Milton Keynes just to name 3.

The Society responded to the BCC “**Draft Buckingham Transport Strategy – Summary**”. The key point was the western link - A422 to the Buckingham bypass (A421) and the Society view was expressed that it should be extended to the south of Buckingham as this was proposed in the first public consultation of the Buckingham local plan. Also a clear point was made that if the western link was built stronger HGV restrictions should be implemented to protect the town centre.

The **HS2** construction routes have been published and the A421 from Tingewick to Milton Keynes is a major cross country route which is of concern - it will significantly increase the traffic on this two way single lane road. We have seen in the recent past the effects if there is the slightest disruption on this road.



A vertical poster for the Great British Spring Clean 2017. At the top is a heraldic crest featuring a white swan on a shield. Below the crest, the word "Heroes" is written in large, bold, grey letters, followed by "Wanted." in a slightly smaller grey font. To the right of the text is a superhero figure with a blue mask, red cape, and blue shirt, standing on a large pile of trash. The superhero is holding a broom. The background shows a city skyline. Below the superhero, the text reads: "It's time to clean up this town!", "March 3—5 2017", and "Take part in the Great British Spring Clean". At the bottom left is the logo for "The Great British Spring Clean", which includes a map of the United Kingdom. To the right of the logo, the text "Contact Buckingham Town Council on 01280 816426 or e-mail events@buckingham-tc.gov.uk for more information".

Volunteer Needed

The Buckingham Society needs the help of someone with website design skills to help us with our own web site. If you can help please contact the editor.



Candleford Court Footpath

The Buckingham Society, thanks the Guiness Trust for completing the repairs to the Candleford Court footpath. The slope up to Bridge Street from the footpath will now be much easier for people to navigate and the repair to the sunken area is a great improvement. The whole area around the path looks so much better now; a much more welcoming environment for Buckingham residents to use. Lights now??

2017 Dates for your diary

27 th April	7.30pm	Hustings for County Council Elections
17 th June		Civic Day
20 th July		Annul lecture and garden party
15 th November		Annual General Meeting

Executive Committee:

Roger Edwards	Chair
David Child	Transport and Planning
Carolyn Cumming	Planning
Paul Fleello	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
Colin Stocker	University representative

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: 07834 484762. If you would like be become involved in any of our activities or attend a meeting of the executive committee, then contact us or just come along.
www.buckingsociety.org.uk